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THE MERMAID

and Other Pieces.

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THE MERMAID

AND

OTHER PIECES.

BY

E. PATTERSON;

With an Introduction

By S. C. F.

[PATTERSON, E.]

PUBLISHED

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INSCRIBED

TO

JAMES MUNN, ESQ.

INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE been asked to write a few words of introduction to this volume of verse, to stand as literary godfather to the first-born of an unknown Poet, but one who is deserving of being heard, even should the public mis-hear his singing and fail to grasp his message.

It is, I know, an unusual thing for one to pen an introduction to another's work, except the latter be dead, when "elucidations" and introductions are worked out in laudatory fashion. The best praise is reserved for poets or for other men after they have passed beyond human aid and encouragement. Living, the critics sting them as they did Byron, Shelley, Keats, and Poe. But the days of Quarterly Reviewing are past, and there are some critics, who boast of their profession, and yet can discover some good in the present-day poets. It is no unusual thing to read in the literary papers criticisms, and just, even laudatory, appreciations of minor verse of new poets. But by this I do not mean to assert that the carping critics are an extinct race, or that it is an easy matter for a Poet to gain a hearing for which he longs and works, and to which his ability justly entitles him.

It is still the fashion of the majority of well-educated people to sneer at Poetry, and especially at the Local Poet. Should some acquaintance with a faculty for stringing together rhymes, or phrases with a jingling alliteration, chance to write in an Album "a Sonnet," full of exaggerated praise of the supposed virtues of its owner, then it is possible that the contribution will be described as beautiful, exquisite, and "so very fine"—but alas! in how many cases does this sort of criticism and appreciation of poetry sum up the critic's knowledge of the subject. The owner of that Album—whom I need not state is a sup-

positious person created to represent a type—who absorbs rhyming flattery from his friend, will openly sneer at a lyrical poem and throw down a volume of verse, uttering caustic criticism of "fellows who write poetical nonsense." Anyone may sneer and criticise; it requires little ability or insight to do that even with the work of the greatest poets. To enjoy poetry and to be able to realise the imagery, catch the rythmic cadence of the poet's language, and the sublimity of his thought, require in the reader the possession of the poetic faculty; and this poetic faculty—the ear to catch the poet's music, the eye to see the beauties of his imagery and the soul to receive his message—is in the possession of most men. The faculty lies dormant, it is true, but it is there nevertheless. Instead of poetry being popular, as it should be, it is neglected in the Schools, scorned in the drawing rooms, and, where it is not completely disregarded, criticised and ridiculed.

Zoilus presented to Apollo a very caustic criticism upon a work of many admirable parts. The god asked what were the beauties of the book, whereupon Zoilus made answer that he only busied himself about the errors. Thereupon Apollo handed him back a big measure of unwinnowed wheat and bade him pick out all the chaff for his reward. I trust that the reader into whose hands this volume falls will not busy himself over-much with the errors, but will rather seek for the beauties of thought and the music of the language in which the author has cast his musings.

And here a word on the general subject of Poetry. I shall not stay to discuss why Poetry has so many detractors. That would require too many pages and make wearisome an introduction to a volume of pleasant verse. Yet it is strange, when we bear in mind the fact that every literature of every country begins in Poetry, that only a comparative few read poetry and find delight in the poetic. It is in the poetic form that we get the first recorded thoughts and musings of men. The thought and expression of a people find utterance in one man, and he in his efforts to record the spirit and the thought of his age frames his sentences in rhythmic measures. The earliest compositions in the English language are in metrical form, and deal with religious and

warlike subjects. And so, too, the grandest themes in the language of Milton and Shakespeare—as those of Homer and Dante—are cast in the poetic mould. For "poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds," it "makes immortal all that is best and most beautiful in the world," and it "redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man." If Poets are, as Shelley says, "the unacknowledged legislators of the world" their fate is often complete neglect; they have not learned to compel attention by their legislation, nor to make the many see the beauties and admire the wisdom which is locked up in the work of English poets. Nor indeed have they silenced the detractor of Poetry. From the days of Sir Philip Sidney, who wrote "An Apologie for Poetrie" down to Hazlitt, many a "Defence of Poetry" has been written, and there is still need for more. Indeed, every Poet and poetaster is continually on his defence against the detractors of Poetry. "He who has a contempt for poetry cannot have much respect for himself, or for anything" wrote Hazlitt, but it is an unbelieving world!

It is still difficult for a Poet to get a hearing, save in the "Poet's Corner" of a weekly newspaper or on the quarter-page of a Monthly Magazine, where a poem is frequently inserted by the Editor, instead of leaving it for the Printer to fill up with an ugly "tail-piece." But by these detached poems and stray sonnets it is impossible to realise the genius of the Poet. A short time ago, when perusing a play by the author of this volume, I ventured to ask—Have we in our midst a Chatterton fretting out his soul to express himself and pining because of the world's indifference to his genius or his physical wants? Many a poet dies unknown, unsung. Though quite a number of volumes of minor verse have been published recently and others still come fresh from the press, indicating that there are purchasers of poems, it is the custom to look askance and with suspicion on a poet whose work is still mostly in M.S. Poets and thoughts of "lunar influences" are usually present together in the mind of the man who "can't read poetry," whenever he hears of a neighbour who courts the muses and wanders on the slopes of Parnassus. Poetry does not

pay, one is frequently reminded, and it is often described as a "drug in the market." The majority do not read poetry—for them the sex-problem and the sensational in fiction. For the Poet there is scant reward, and the Laureateship is not now for genius but a plum for a Court versemaker. And I doubt not there have been many like Chatterton.—

"The marvellous boy,
The sleepless soul, that perished in his pride."

By the publication of this volume the author of "The Mermaid," and the other pieces herein contained, has been given a wider publicity than the Poet's Corner in a newspaper, and the reading public have thus an opportunity of judging his work by a very representative collection of his poems. In writing this introduction I have studiously avoided the very prevalent weakness which one sees manifested every day to laud and bepraise the work of young writers by mentioning them in favourable connection with the great names in Literature. How often do we read of some "Sir Walter Scott of Wales," a "Welsh Shakespeare," and a "Welsh Charles Lamb"! It is not my province to compare the items contained in this volume with the work of the Poets, to contrast a lyrical passage with the best that Shelley has written, a classical image with one from Keats, an epigrammatic phrase with another from Shakespeare, to set-off a fine poetical metaphor by one from Milton; nor do I desire to occupy the position of lecturer at a panoramic show, nor accompany the reader through the volume, like a professional "guide" declaiming on the beauties of this and that and pointing to the rarest parts. The reader must do this for himself, for what strikes one person as a gem, another will pass by unnoticed. But of this I am confident: that if the reader does not, in the spirit of Zoilus, occupy himself entirely in looking for errors and framing caustic criticism on the work his reward will be more satisfactory than that presented by Apollo.

S.C.F.

CARDIFF, June, 1897.

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BLAME not my lute! for he must sound
Of this or that, as liketh me;
For lack of wit the lute is bound
To give such tunes as pleaseth me;
Though my songs be somewhat strange,
And speak such words as touch my change,
Blame not my lute!

SIR THOMAS WYATT.

The Mermaid.

Scene: Among the Ionian Islands.

Prelude.

"WHEN skies are softly fair,
And Night's small sentinels in shyness peep
Through foamlike clouds that idly creep
As thin as wanton air;
And cooing breezes murmur low
Along the rippled bosom of the heaving deep,
And weary eyes are peacefully asleep;
And phosphorescent glow
Of waters, as they swish
The lazy vessel's side,
The sailors tell of depths where eyeless fish
Can feel nor wind nor tide:
When hornèd is the moon,
And smooth the ebbless sea—
Enwrapt amid the glamouring mystery
Of witching night—
Then is the noon,

The full ripe summer-time,
The flood-tide point, the prime
Of my delight.
When rides the soft Grey King,*
On damp and silent wing,
Above the ever restless wave
That slowly moves along the mighty unstoned grave
Wherein is merged some millions of men,
Or killed or drowned,
Oh! I do then
Full gaily float around,
Where hidden rocks—
An unknown current seeks—
Give fearsome shocks,
Begetting stopless leaks;
And while with pearly scallopped shell—
Found in an iridescent grot
Where Nereids dwell,
By Care and Pain forgot—
My amber hair, of finest scented weed,
I comb; and there my song I sing, and lead
The drifting vessel where
Our caverned homes in secret lie,
Rock-hidden from the human eye.

"Soft, soft as the sigh of the surging sea
On a silvery strand when sleepily

* Fog or thick mist.

The slow waves shoreward roam ;
Low, low, low as the coo of the amorous gull,
When he struts on the rock at his season's full
To make himself a home ;
Sweet, sweet as the flesh of the pinky shell
That fishermen term the queenly belle
Of all this realm of foam,
Is the song that leaves my sea-loved lip
Deathward to lure the windless ship.

———o———

"When Zephyrs play, or Eurus gently sweeps
The star-lit surface of the fathomed deeps ;
Or whispering comes the soft Etesian wind ;
Or dry Solano, leaving woe behind,
I mingle with their sound
The music of my song,
And woo the ship aground
Where undiscovered streams do throng
To rock or shoal or bank,
Where many a craft it struck and sank
To fishy depths beneath.

"Over the waters with soft coo-coo
My voice goes stealing away ;
Lulling the senses as fond lovers do,
Winning my loves with my lay ;
Rising and falling, and rising again ;

Casting a spell o'er the hearts of men,
Finding, and winding about their ears,
Circe-like soothing their human fears;
Winding and binding them all to me;
Leading them down to my home in the sea—
To my white and my green and my violet-hued
Deep grot in the 'gulfing sea.

———o———

"When Naiads sleep, and black the skies appear,
And sullen waves their crestless heads uprear—
As if the Cyclops played in sport below—
Then backward fall for want of Mistral's blow;
When all the sea is labouring beneath,
And—like the child in its elastic sheath—
Doth cause a sign less marked without than in,
And e'en the air is murmuring of that din
Which but Erinyēs make; when on the beach
The agitated waters fall, and teach—
By sob and sigh and moan—the weather-wise,
The Spirit of the storm no longer lies
In letheistic sleep:

"I gleefully then prepare,
The battling men to snare
With songs, that ring
As if they spring
From seraphim in air.

" When Boreâs bursts from icy north,
And whips our world to wrath !
Or blasting Syrian hurries forth
To line the coast with froth !
Or Africus, or Câecias, or biting Argestēs
Howls at crooked Cynthia, and drives the savage seas !—
With crested heads and curling tops
That naught but adamantine rock e'er stops,
Or undiminishable space
Returns to their appointed place—
To foam and hiss ; and leap on high,
As if to front the very sky
And Heaven itself invade !
When round the rocks—in wild disorder made
To crash and roar, recede, return ;
To surge and seethe and spit, and spurn
Their very selves in impotence as fierce as Hell !—
The waters sink, then rise and swell
As if they'd gulp the world !
When darkness reigns ;
And snap Erinyēs their prison chains,
And, winging o'er the seven-circling stream,
Return to night—their brooding, black-browed dream
And crime-begetting dam—their horrid heads aglow
With writhing snakes, while drops of blood out flow
Their damned and fearsome eyes !
When driving cloud and hurrying scud
Shut out the light of moon, or star, that would
Assistance give the seaman in his plight ;

And Death stalks large—in sheer despite
Of Mercy's pleading cry
To spare the unprepared-to-die ;
Who die with oath half-uttered on the lips,
And speak the rest in Hell,—and wholesale slips
The tethered souls of men,
As man would free from pound or pen
A flock of frightened sheep :
When ships—with broken spars and tattered sails,
And men who craved for capfuls fight the gales
They did not ask—drive helpless on a dead
Leeshore ; and sailors, numbed with cold, dowed
Themselves, with grinding teeth and flashing eyes,
To fight a hand-to-hand for life they prize
With fierce and socialistic death ;

" Then I seek the lee of a shelving rock,
Where I, Necken-like, their vain efforts mock.

Storm Song.

" Wild and weird o'er the gale-lashed sea,
Twisted and twirled by the shrieking wind ;
Seeming a part of its maddened glee !
Now here, now there, ahead, behind ;
I send my song through the blinding spray
To lead the mariners hither astray.

"Over the waters and over the deck,
About the sails and among the shrouds ;
Seeking the labouring ship to wreck ;
Now lost in the sea, now up in the clouds ,
Hurrying, dallying, never at rest,
Ever bent on a ghoul-like quest.

"Now high ! then low ; now piercing sweet,
Then as a sigh of a spirit's pain ;
Now seemingly the driving sleet,
And now the cry of the troubled main !
Through hatches, in cabins,—now tenderly soft,
Windward and leeward, alow and aloft.

"Now borne on the crest of a towering wave,
The tortured soul of the wild Siroc !
Now moaning low in the blue-green grave
Where the shifting sand, and the submerged rock,
And the coral-reef, and we Sirens lurk
To do Posidon's special work.

"Thrilling the soul, killing the sense,
Dwelling a pause . . . then swelling thence
In higher and wilder and sweeter notes,
Which far overhead the mad wind floats !
Appearing of Heaven, yet springing from Hell ;
Misleading the most when seeming to dwell
To the lee of the fated ship !

Fainting away in the flying spray,
As the sobbing soul of a slaughtered Fay ;
Yearning and turning and burning ;
Hiding, revealing ;
Wheeling and wounding, and healing ;
Playing tattoos on the heart, and feeling
The pulse of the listening soul—
As rolling and tumbling nearer the goal,
Pitching and surging comes the ship—
Is the song I sing,
And the wild storm-King
Bears far from mine unkissed lip !

———o———

" When daylight breaks—dull, cold, and grey—
Revealing all the elemental fray
Has brought about :—sails torn to shreds,
And splintered spars that dangle o'er the heads
Of sopping-garbed men, whose faces tell
Of toil in salty lines—where lurking dwell
The yarns of many storms,—eyes bleared with brine,
And matted hair wherein—like frost—do shine
The particles of salt ; and fingers bent
And stiff with oft embracing ropes which lent
A succour from the waves ; decks white and bare,
Except the water swishing here and there ;
The dripping cordage, hatches battened fast ;
And broken halyards swaying round the mast—

All proofs of storm unspent :

"When day has come, and still no sign of rest
In sky or wind—that rears the sea's great breast
Into a myriad of nipples, fierce
And large and white, that hissing rush to pierce
The groaning ship, and yield not life but death—
And sailors eye their mates, and catch their breath ;
And talk with fear of hatches over-turned ;
Knives stuck in masts, and low blue lights that burned
But yestereve about the weather-vane ;
Of many foundered ships that tried in vain
To run a Friday's voyage ; of drownèd cats,
And vessels out of which the auguring rats
Decamped when last in port ; of sneezes done
To left, and squealing pigs, and whistling on
The bow by thoughtless lads ; of horsey dreams,
And where the light of woman's eye out-gleams
The brilliance of gems ; and other things
Which fill the sailor's mind with murmurings,
And speak to him of wrecks :
"When lulls the gale ;
And shouting seamen spread another sail
To check the roll, and forge the ship ahead
From where I lie near by that thing they dread
As dolphins do the shark, a bristling reef
Of rocks but just awash—a line of grief
As grim as Gorgon-Stheno's horrid face,
Outlined with foamy effervescent lace

Instead of serpent-hair, a spot that oft,
While guarding thus th' adjacent coast, aloft
Has sent in haste, or else headlong to Hell,
A dozen souls at once.

"Then I sing my song in a different key,
To win the mariners hither to me.

———o———

When falls the night, and all the wind has gone,
Erinyës their share of work have done,
And hied them back below ; when stars once more,
And pale young moon, from cloudless sky, do o'er
The waters cast their tender light ; and rolls
The bark from side to side, until it tolls
The bell itself, as if in play 'twould call
The slumbering watch : when monstrous seas do fall
(Like lazy giants wanting mental force
To give a purpose to their feeble course
Of life) against the vessel's planks, and flaps
The sail about the mast in mimic claps
Of thunder ; while the worn-out watch on deck—
No longer dreading death, or wind, or wreck—
Do doze around forgetful of the fear
The storm-fiend made them feel.

"When such the hour,
I tune my voice to fit the time ;

And mould my song with soothing rhyme
And subtle power.

"As soft as the down on Psyche's arm,
More gentle than youths when their loves they seek,
The shy young maids to tell;
As potent as Æsculapian balm,
And fair as the flush on a new bride's cheek
Where beauty and modesty dwell;
As sweet as the snare of Æmonian charm,
More lulling than love when it 'gins to speak
And cast o'er the heart its spell;
Is my song to the sailors awake or asleep,
On the siren-like breast of the mystical deep.

Song to the Night.

"O'er turquoise-depths I float and sing,
While thus you move on world-shot wing;
And stars their borrowed lustre show—
Calm, faint, and fair, with nun-like glow.

"O beauteous stars; ah, soothing Night;
O wondrous bars of quivering light,
That tender roam o'er green-white foam—
Chaste diamonds in an azure dome!

"Smile on, O Night—mysterious veil—
While soft I tell my rhythmic tale
Of sweet enchanting grots below,
Where tides are not, nor breezes blow.

"Give sleep, O Moon ; stir not, O Wind ;
I crave the boon, the crew to bind
With spirit-thong, in bonds as strong
As was Calypso's magic song.

Song to the Sea.

"Swelling sea and rolling billow,
Ye whereon my head I pillow
As I braid my yellow hair ;
While the Night soft tears is weeping,
And the mariners are sleeping,
Come, assist me then to snare.

"As ye wander—rising, falling,
Feathery-foam and green mounds calling
On the wind to hold ye up—
Bear their floating home where singing
Here I lie, in hope of bringing
Them to-night with me to sup.

Twist a current, swiftly winding
Past the ship, and straightway finding
Where the rocks in hiding wait.
While I weave a charm about them,
Deeper than the grave without them,
Drift the sleepers to their fate.

Song to the Mariners.

" The moonbeams step from wave to wave,
And silver thus each crest ;
The gale is o'er, and idly heaves
Old Ocean's loveless breast.
And over moving foam-capped hills,
Down vales of shimmering green—
Where fishes hold their star-lit court,
And rules a Nereid-queen—
With swaying sails your rolling ship rides high ;
Her vane-spike seems to write upon the sky.

" Come, follow on while thus I sing,
And sweet weird music free ;—
My instrument's a crimson shell,
Which Orpheus gave to me ;
The strings are made of Echo's hair,
And sweeter ne'er has been ;

My bow is of Euterpe's lyre—
Of all the Nine the queen ;
Erato's shade doth dwell within and sings,
And when I play she breathes upon the strings.

"Come to cerulean depths with me,
Come to our caverns below ;
Come where the mermaidens wanton free,
Down where no suns ever glow.

"Crystalised jewels give all light there,
Beryl and sapphire, and all ;
Diamond and emerald, and turquoise fair,
Set in a clear amber wall.

"Mother-of-pearl is the only thing
Mermaids will ever employ ;
All other things, to the songs we sing,
Leave we for you to enjoy.

"Down in the mirroring depths beneath,
Purple, gold, crimson, and white,
Violet and pink in a rainbow-wreath
Render a glorious light.

"Gardens we make with bright-hued weeds
Scented, and sweet to the taste ;

Kisses we give till the pale lip bleeds—
Come to our bosoms in haste.

"There in our grottos where dolphins die,
Giving the walls a new glow,*
Nereids shall tend you with rolling eye;
Never a pain shall you know.

"Sleep, tired eyes,
A long sweet calm I bring;
Elysian prize
For you is on the wing.
Rest . . . rest . . . rest;
No more wild seas or gales
Shall stop your quest,
Or tear your speeding sails.
Sleep . . . sleep . . . sleep,
Upon the cradling deep;
The task is nearly done,
The last port almost won—
Sleep . . . sleep . . . ye weary sailors, sleep.

"While slumbers sweet
Enchain your roving minds,
Your winding sheet
I spread where no one finds.

*The dying dolphin turns almost all manner of pretty shades and colours.

Dream . . . dream . . . dream,
And think yourselves at home,
Where bright eyes gleam
A welcome from the foam.
Peace . . . peace . . . peace;
From pain and toil release.
Now comes the long repose
From all your human woes;
Your circumscribèd lives shall cease
In waters deep;
Sleep . . . sleep . . . sleep;
For ever and for ever shall ye sleep . . .

———o———

"Crash! on the rocks—'tis the ship aground!
A moment thus . . . and the waters bound
Into the hold, and she reels aside;
Then backward falls in the wolfish tide!
Flung from its feet is the watch on deck,
An instinct tells of approaching wreck!
Up from below the affrighted leap!
Half folded still in the arms of sleep.

"Time grants no space to think of boats,
Or planks, or anything that floats!
Already creep the waters high;
And circles round, with horrid cry,

The vulture of the seas ! There's not
Enough of time but for a jot
Of low and half unconscious prayer,
As eyes dilate and daftly stare
About ; and then a rush ! a leap !
A roll ! . . a gurgle; and the deep,
The rocks, the sea-gulls, and the foam,
The pallid moon and star-flecked dome,
Arrayed in mute sublimnity,
Are all the human eye can see."

THE POET'S DEATH.

YE sacred Nine of old Olympian birth
Inspire my tale—poor lowly song of earth ;
And make it fit its subject to adorn,
Or it will be of every beauty shorn.
And thou, the Nine's fair mother, pray attend
And guide my else strayed thoughts unto the end
Of this poor verse ; which—though uncultured be,
And read by none—will yet be dear to me.

———o———

In garret bare, where all the world has long
Agreed in placing him, the Poet sits
With hectic-spotted hollow cheeks. His frame—
Ah ! once with rosy health aglow and plump,
And big with sinewed pledge of strength in years
To come—is shattered now, for foul Decay
Has laid a heavy hand on him. And yet,
He heeds it not. Nor does he know that, slow
But sure—ay ! doubly, cruelly sure—fell Death,
The grinning churl, fast steals on him ; for this his soul
Is lost too far a-wing in his own world.

His eyes, in youth so bright with quickening fire,
Are shrunk as though with age ; and round each lid
A circle dark has grown—Consumption paints
Her victims with those colours all her own.
Yet even now they glow with vivid light.
Come, mark him well, as here he sits so far
Removed in Fancy's witching realm. See, how
His orbs oft change their pensive mood as works—
In spite of him—the busy mind within.
Lo ! now a spark is bursting into flame,
That leaps, and grows with steady strong increase
Until it burns a veritable fire.
Now watch the varied lights those eyes display,
As riot on his too untethered thoughts :
One moment fierce, the next a little sad,
Then slowly comes their passion back again ;
Anon to droop and gently die away,
And give its place—ere scarce a minute's gone—
To looks of soft delight ; while these, in turn,
Are quickly followed by a deepening touch
Of love's unfathomable tenderness. . . .
Another change : this time a far-off gaze
His eyes assume : perhaps gone back to some
Time-misted age, and now are looking on
A life and race of men that differ from
His own, another set of manners and
Of forms, a widely different barbarous code
Of social laws and due observances ;
Or forward go to ages yet unborn,

And—wizard-like—now try their best to pierce
That most impenetrable veil, a dim
Futurity—a land unknown, undreamt.
No human tongue can say of what those eyes
Are gazing on, oblivious to Now ;
Forgetting all surrounding things, his soul—
His all, the prey of shackle-spurning genius.

He now sees not around him spread the signs
Of chilling, grinding, worldly poverty.
No thought of care, or grief, or pain ; no dread
Of scanty fare, bare walls, hard couch, or want
Of friends or magic pelf, assail him now.
The world's neglect, the cold disdain of those
Of higher state, the critics' snubs, the fool's
Wise sneer, the senseless hate of bigot-minds
Are mouthed by kind Oblivion—are lost
To heart and brain, are dead and e'en forgot.
His mind possessed is peopled with a race
Of Fancy born—a race none else may share.
Is it to fair Euterpe that he wakes
His lyric-lyre ? Or is't Thalia, with
A smile, who courts his thoughts ? Or does the Muse,
Melpomene, inhabit now his brain,
And fill his airy stage with horrid shapes
And deeds ? Perchance 'tis truthful Clio whom
He now invokes, or mutely calls the aid
Of Terpsichore to frame some witching dance ?
Perhaps the stately clear-cut eloquence

Of epic-toned Calliope fills up
His soul; or lovely gentle Erato
Engages it with some fond story of
A noble never-dying love? While on
From stage to stage the kind Mnemosyne
Bides near that she might help the toiling brain.
Oh! which? Not e'en his rapid pen can trace
Imagination's whirling avalanche.
And yet, how little recks the world how toils
His soaring soul; how limited its thought
Of those long nights he spends in mental pain!
How petty is the meed of praise or heed
It gives his soul-born work!—until at last,
When stops the tired brain its busy loom;
When he no more the sickly taper burns;
Nor longer with the muse sweet commerce holds,
And shattered lies the once too eager lyre:
Till then, and oh! how often not till then,
Does man at large heed aught the Poet writes.

Here! watch him now as, stretched on humble couch,
He yeilds his dying breath; and mark his weak
And well-nigh palsied limbs, his quivering lips;
His pitted cheeks, and glazing sunken eye.
Ay, gaze upon this high and dome-shaped head,
And think how works the over-active brain.
What fancy does it trace in these, the pangs
Of fast approaching death? Behold his eyes—
The windows of a strangely musing soul—

And wonder what they see that makes them change
So oft,—now dim, now bright, now looking far
Away. Gaze yet again, and wonder still
Once more, does talent live within that head?
Has Genius not a dwelling there? Or can
That bulging brow contain no powerful thought,
No strong creative force? Gaze, gaping crowd,
On this attenuated form and say
What is its secret cause? "Is't wilful mad
Debauchery? Or can it be a fool's
Extravagance? Or blind heredity—
A legacy bequeathed by something less
Than man and little more than beast? Or has
Long hardsome toil and meagre fare reduced
This form from its full state?" Ah, yes! 'tis this.
But not the labour of his hands—no, not
His body's force. 'Tis want of proper food,
A far too restless busy brain, and night
On night spent o'er a flickering flame, that thus
Hath marked him as the early tenant of
A clay-upholstered room.
Lo! now his limbs
Grow weak; his brow bears beads of sweat;
His eyelids rise and fall with slow uncertain move,
And guttural sounds escape his parchèd throat. . . .
Man's friendly foe, the even-handed Leveller,
Now claims the poor neglected bard's loaned breath.
Yet e'en in dissolution's pains the soul
Maintains its power, and fires the flagging pulse,—

Imagination springs again to life
And lights the dimming eye ; instead of blood
The heart pumps through his veins wild lyrics such
As melt e'en human ice. Him do they thrill.
He turns him o'er, and motions for a pen—
On Death's own shadow-brow he would inscribe
The witching mystery of a magic line.
Alas ! he beckons to the air. No eyes
Tear-fraught, no soothing tongue, no heaving breast,
Nor kindly hand holds post beside his couch.
The effort was too much—his thin hand drops ;
His eyes put down their curtains wearily ;
The perspiration clammy grows ; his lean
White fingers twitch—one long last laboured heave,
A quivering throb, a strong convulsive throe,
And all is o'er : the dreamer lies asleep
On Death's cold breast. His starring spirit's took
Its latest longest flight, and gone to find
The realms of which it dreamt so oft on earth

His last long night of deepening thought is spent ;
No more for him the midnight's precious oil,
Nor roamings near the silent lake beneath
A waning moon ; ne'er will he court the muse,
Ne'er strike the pensive lyre ; nor ever feel
The galling stings of chill neglect from proud
And high-born men ; no more the curling lip
His gentle soul will touch, nor will he heed
The critic's grudgèd spite, nor fear embrace

From Penury's gaunt arms. All these are past,
To come no more to him in that far land
Beyond the grave where pain, and fear, and grief,
Where toil, and care, and death, are all unknown.

The morrow comes—the morrow is to-day,
And his old haunts no longer know his steps.
His garret's sought, and he is found outstretched,
A livid corse ; his death-bed bare and grim,
A hardened couch ; his handmaids, Want and Care ;
His valet, pale Consumption hollow-cheeked ;
His surgeon and physician, callous Death.
In steps the Law, all draped in robes of might,
And coarsely asks—with lack of feeling and
Of better sense—who is this foolish one
That ends his life in such a wretched state?

His papers soon are searched to prove his name,
His birth or parentage. (Those written sheets
O'er which he spent so many weary nights
In loving toil ; corrected slips that prove
His great affection for his work—how well
He used the talent God entrusted to
His care ; sheets which are stamped so plainly with
The patent spirit-mark of Genius).
Eyes rude and coarse are eager gazing on,
And fingers even ruder touch, those slips
So dear to his lone soul ; then soon the world
Becomes aware that here a gifted mind

Lies dead—that one more alien soul has fled,
And gone to give a full account at God's
Own judgment bar.
And what now says the world?
'Tis sorry that it knew him not ere this.
It lifts its hands in vast astonishment
That one, so strangely great in soul and mind,
Should unknown die of want amid such wealth;
Then straight proceeds to make amends for its
Own past misdeeds. His works are quickly placed
Before a too-late conscience-smitten world,
And keenly scanned by eager waiting crowds.
The critics kind—Oh! wise and gentle race—
O'erweight their talk with praise of lines on which,
A few brief months ago, they would have passed
A condemnation strong;—*de mortius*
Nil nisi bonum!—and the learned are much
Surprised to find that one poor soul could bring
Such truths to light in their benighted days.
The monied dunce—fool-fashion's ape—his few
Brains rack to grasp the meaning of those truths;
The bigotted, and those of colder blood,
Now hold their bitter tongues; and Envy e'en
Is silent made with admiration dumb.
So moves the world! Another great has lived
And died unfound, unguessed, and left his mark
Indelible on Time's revolving scroll.
Anon the marble tells its own vast tale;
Yet, pray what recompense is this to that

Poor soul who made himself an early grave?—
Who wrote for his own day; who asked for food;
Who begged a spark of sympathy and love;
And found he wrote and hungered, begged and wept in vain.

ERATO.

(AN EXTRACT.)

SWEET Erato, love's own peculiar muse,
Then up and 'gan soft pity to diffuse :
Fair being made of love's forlonest sigh,
A tear-fraught passion peeping from each eye.
So tender she, her birth she might have owed
Unto the perfume of a rose, that glowed
One time a pure white ; but forced to blush
A ruddy hue because, amid the garden's hush,
A maid had whispered to its virgin-heart
A secret love that caused her many a smart.
So, too, the pensive soulful muse was frail—
An unkind look would make the maiden quail.
And she had beauty—loveliness too sweet ;
Too fair, soft, winsome, delicate, complete
In all that forms ethereal beauty's soul—
Essence divine, illimitable whole.
Wavy her hair as e'er was breath of Spring,
Or glinting sunbeams through the opening

Of Winter's massed black clouds ; or as the glow
Of true-love's shyest glances when they owe
Their being to a gentle maiden's eyes
Flashing quick looks, and fearing a surprise :
Light as the fancy of a fickle mind,
More buoyant than was ever flirting wind ;
Luxuriant as the growth of tropic weeds,
That for each plant cast down a thousand seeds :
It softly shone—soft with uncertain light,
Exuding from its threads as stars from night ;
Pale, luminous, hiding, playful like the glow
Of waves at midnight, 'gainst a vessel's prow :
Thickly it lay about her lily-bust,
Excepting when the sportive air discussed
Its right to be sole lover, and efface
So much sweet witchery by its close embrace ;
Then did it lift and float, and fall, and stream
Again ; a mass of beauteous light ; a dream
Of airy grace ;—a miniature cloud
Of twisted, mingling, fairy starbeams bowed
About with semi-darkness ; rising soft,
And falling softer ; gently touched aloft,
As zephyrs puff a bunch of thistle-bloom
Released from Earth's inimitable loom.
On each fair cheek there grew a shaming rose,
As delicate as were the tinted snows
Encircling them about. Her musing eyes—
Half-veiled first fonts of loves that idolise—
Were like the breaking of twin dewy morns,

Such as the land of Araby adorns ;
Encompassed, too, by purest pearly white,
Indefinitely blent with pink so slight
And fair and pensive it was scarcely seen,—
'Twas Beauty's spirit powerful demesne) ;
Two large and lustrous liquid pearls—full shy
And soft—afloat in gleaming dew of high
Transparency, and lit with love's own light
That far outshone the brightest gems of night ;
Two tender sentinels, fringèd around
With finest threads of gold that could be found,
Set there to watch and guard the circling snow,
And treasured blooms upon the cheeks below.
Her brow was like an alabaster urn
In which a sweet soft rosy light doth burn ;
Or as a piece of ice evolved from dew,
Flushed with the faintest pinky-tinctured hue
That man or artist-Nature ever made,
And granted life. Her matchless lips (afraid,
Almost, to open wide because the breeze—
Enamoured of such charms—would leave the trees
To fasten on their luscious red, and kiss
Itself into a welcome death of bliss)
To love played prison-gates, of such a mould
As were but fashioned by Praxitelës of old ;
Gates that in durance kept two perfect rows
Of fairy tooth-shaped pearls, large, white as snows
On Alpine peaks long bleached with summer suns,
And purer e'en than saintly life-long nuns.

Her bosom—tender home of love more chaste
Than e'er in human hearts has Eros placed—
More lightly rose than might a tiny sheet
Of breasted marble, living, warm, and sweet ;
And upward pressed by perfume-laden air,
That loved it so to touch it scarcely dare ;
Seductive 'twas as freedom to a mind
Imprisoned, and full eager as the wind ;
And gentler fell than e'en the velvet-foam
Falls on the golden beach from waves meandering home.
Small was her head, yet suited to her form
As kisses fit the lips that love their storm.
Her limbs were downy like a ripened peach,
Rounded and full, and softer than Love's speech.
Nor tall was she, as daughters of great Jove
Have oft been said to be by those who rove
In Fancy's witching midnight-conjured realm—
Uneyed Imagination at the helm
Of airy barks no seas can over-whelm ;
But she was tall enough for roaming Love
To wish her neither under nor above
Just what she was. Her neck, the source of grace,
So well it poised th' incomparable face ;
Like marble white, and supple to surpass
The jointless snake that crawls among the silken grass.
Her pose, her bearing—that sweet spirit of
Her movements, looks, and manner, was as love

Unspoken is unto a pensive maid
Who longs to kiss the boy but is afraid :
Or as the dew-besprinkled roseate light
That streaks the Orient dawn, subtle and bright,
Fairy-like dancing on the skirts of Night ;
So airy was it that it seemed to me
As starry down ; or gossamer set free
And full of light, soft-toyed with by a wind
As gentle as a mother love-refined :
'Twas like a spirit-rose such as might grow
On stem of twisted wind, lit with the glow
Of spirit-light, and buoyant as the air
That laughs o'er lakes where rain and fogs are rare.
Her parted lips gave sounds more rich than notes
That issue from the warm voluptuous throats
Of blackbirds, in their full spring-tide of song
When home-providing hawthorne trees among ;
Yet were they low—low as should be Love's voice
When joy is much too heavy to rejoice ;
Clear as the radiant font of Heaven's own light,
And sweeter than the poet's mad delight
When revelling in frenzy-painted sweets
Down wild Imagination's deep retreats :
Such was their music that they might have stayed
The lifted hand of vengeance, stopped the blade
By grimest justice aimed ; or could have made
The first of sinners to release a soul
O'er which he held the fullest of control ;
Giv'n joy to hearts that had a life-time mourned ;

Turned into love the hate of woman scorned,
And in whose breast the worst intent did lurk ;
Or called a maddened murderer from his work
While yet the awful deed was incomplete,
Though dying lay the victim at his feet.

Such was the muse who then begun to tell
Of things that long ago to gods and men befel.

IF thou survive my . . . . . day,
When that churl Death my bones with dust shall cover,
And shalt by fortune once more re-survey
These poor rude lines of thy deceasèd lover,—
Compare them with the bettering of the time;
And tho' they be out-stripp'd by every pen,
Reserve them for my love, not for their rhyme,
Exceeded by the height of happier men.
O, then vouchsafe me but this loving thought!—
"Had my friend's muse grown with his growing age,
A dearer birth than this his love had brought,
To march in ranks of better equipage;
But since he died, and poets better prove,
Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his love."

SHAKSPEARE.

SONNETS.

"Dear Love."

DEAR Love,—in whose fair bosom spotless beams
A heaven here on earth, whose glowing eyes
Soft point my musing soul to yon' fair skies,
And flame with love as sweet as poets' dreams
Could ever be—thy soul doth dwell where streams
A-fresh the light of pure love ; and sighs,
Nor tears, nor pain can dim the light that dies
Not out from thee, and all my joy redeems !

Eudæmonist am I in thee, thou sweet
Evangelist of love, in whom I see
Virtue enthroned—my Vishnu all complete.
Adherent then forever I to thee,
Dear refuge from the world's unrest, replete
Shekinah guiding to eternity.

"And shall an order bind."

And shall an order bind such heart as thine?
Shall icy duty rule within thy breast,
And Love, sweet Love, pass on to seek a nest
Less fair? Ah, fate forbid! thy eyes should shine
On one who would upbraid, or lone heart pine
In after years to welcome that sweet guest
Now knocking at thy heart—as if to test
Thy sense of duty by thy love and mine.

O faithful heart, O depth of love untried!
Abjure thy word and Heaven will forgive;
Or we who love, alas! must drift awide.
Choose now, O heart; shall Love or Duty give
Thy life its light? and then for ever bide
The verdict—whether we drag on or live.

"Must it be so?"

Must it be so? Must here our paths divide?
No more sweet walks, no conversation dear?
Must this great love be parent of a tear,

And shattered lie our barks on life's rough tide?
Oh, God! forfend that thou shouldst cease to guide
My falt'ring footsteps where no lights appear
From thy dear eyes; for in my soul is fear,
O Love! when thou art not myself beside.

How dark must be my path when thou art gone!
Thou love, thou life, thou soul of my late days;
Thou treasured *all* my future rests upon.
If this must be the parting of our ways,
Oh, grave! then open fly—my task is done;
Let cypress be my laurel and my bays.

"Good-bye."

Good-bye: so let it be. Our paths must now
For ever lie apart. Those beaming eyes—
Where gleams a soul that angels pure might prize—
May shine on me no more; thy fair smooth brow,
O Love, my hand can not caress. Yet how,
And why this break?—Ah! deep my soul outcries
To know. And cold hard Duty's voice replies:—
"O warm of heart, remember thou the vow."

Then be it so—the darkened path be mine,
The lonely heart, the tear, the crushed-down sigh ;
Enough ! if joy unchecked be ever thine.

Smile on, Beloved ! Be light thy heart, and I
Will pray for thee ; and wish thee all the wine
Of life, though breaks the heart that breathes good-bye.

"At morn and noon."

At morn and noon I thread the busy street,
Where throngs of faces pass my searching sight ;
In peopled rooms I often tread at night,
Where flit rare beauties owning charms too sweet ;
Throughout the day soft silvery voices greet
My hungering ears : but through the dark and light
Thy winning voice, thy smiles so pure and bright,
My yearning eyes and ears do never meet.

Yet though I see thee not with outer eye,
Nor hear the music of thy lilting tongue,
Thy spirit-self will never from me fly.

Though songs that soothe are on my hearing flung
By those who would me please, they ne'er can die
From memory mine which thou to me hast sung.

"Though far from thee."

Though far from thee jade Tycke bids me stay,
A-like regardless of my love and thine—
Cares she no whit howe'er our hearts may pine
To feel each other beat,—though mountains lay
Between thyself and me, and night and day
Pass on without these longing eyes of mine
Finding their mirror in thy orbs divine,
Yet leagues nor time thy image can decay.

For rising far above the fertile plains,
And over-topping e'en the mountains high,
My pensive spirit lifts itself and gains
A newer sight of thee, and earth and sky—
I think, I *feel*—are filled with thy soft strains,
And straight away is checked my rising sigh.

"Oh! suffering heart."

Oh! suffering heart that pines in vain to know
A breast responsive to thine own peculiar needs:
Oh! buoyant Hope that on the future feeds

The yearning, starving soul with vivid glow
That lights Time's distant chambers dark : Oh ! flow
  Of Love, more strong than death, that burns and bleeds
  The heart that verdant keeps—'mid tangled weeds—
In spite of age, or Want's benumbing snow.

O hungering heart, O glowing hope, O love
  That cannot die ! go on your way through life,
And ye shall reap your full reward above.

  Beyond the grave, beyond the stars, no strife
Shall rip your ardent souls apart. There love
  Too pure for earth shall know eternal life.

"Yes, all or naught."

Yes, all or naught, dear heart, not poised and kept—
  Like vagrant cloud between the earth and sky—
  By sweet uncertain glances, or a sigh
That softly breathes of tears—wiped or unwept.
The wakened soul o'er which thine own hath swept,
  As gently as a seraph from on high
  Might touch a sleeping lute, would up and fly
To thee, O Love, for it too long hath slept.

If I must be the cloud ; then I will rise,
  And pay my worship at the very feet
Of Him who sits enthroned upon the skies ;
  Or burst my bonds, rush down to earth, and greet
In instant death, before my Maker's eyes,
  The only refuge I am left to meet.

"Beloved, if we could bid."

Beloved, if we could bid the day return—
  Not many years ago—when you and I
  Had not yet learnt the language of a sigh ;
When our young hearts knew not what 'twas to yearn
To pluck life's ripest fruit ; and love did burn
  A pure light that lit your gray-brown eye,
  More bright than star in yonder azure sky ;
And life's flood-tears were griefs for us to learn.

Ah ! Sweet, if that could be—with what fond care
  I then would trim your rosy bark's white sail
To catch the breeze of joy ; and onward bear
  You to those sunny climes, where love's true tale
Is told the long day through, and night is fair
  With songs of love that never can grow stale.

"Not thine the blame."

Not thine the blame—if such be constancy;
Thou did'st for me rebel, for me do wrong;
I was the weak, who should have been the strong.
Thy heart—unless 'twere done unwittingly—
Is far too good for faults, if fault there be
In love so pure as ours; a glow, among
Earth's sordid passions, that shines out along
Life's road, and points towards eternity.

Then let the blame, if there be aught of such,
Here rest on me. No breath of censure e'er,
While I do live, thy noble heart shall touch.

Be mine the joy—the dear sweet joy to bear
That punishment, nor matters it how much,
Thy folks or God may deem is justly fair.

"Dear, stretch your arms across."

Dear, stretch your arms across pain's dark abyss,
And twine them round the breast that beats alone
For you; but which, alas! must go to moan

Its sad life out where it, O Love, will miss
Your smiling face, and never know the bliss
  Of meeting you again . . . Nay, let the groan
  Pass on, and seal your lips to mine, my own,
And we will swoon to death amid the kiss!

And if the world should say that we forsook
  The path that leads to Heaven, and were lost
Because in our hot hands we madly took
  Our fate—regardless of the after cost—
What then? Upon the white and sapphired book
  Of love our souls will ever be embossed.

"I would not give thee up."

I would not give thee up; though all the world
  Cried out—Forego! And, standing in between
  Thyself and me, e'en strove and fought to screen
Thee from my sight; like bird on wing unfurled,
I would o'ertop the seething crowd, though hurled
  I were a thousand times aback, and lean
  My heart to thine. Though wells of envious spleen
Should seem—my angel white, fair, pure, impearled
In human form—to paint thee black as night
  Where moon nor star looks out, and hating scorn
Thrust its envenomed finger at thy bright

And purer soul, I still would thee adorn
With all my love—ay, find a sweet delight
In clinging closer to my heart's dear bourne!

"You cannot bring."

You cannot bring yourself to think that here
Our passionship should end? Ah, sweetest one,
I knew your tender heart the union
Could never break—not yours the cold austere,
Not yours the act unjust. And thus those dear,
Soft, soulful eyes of yours that guide me on—
Love-lighted stars—in life's oblivion,
From these dull orbs, will never disappear.

Then brighter, rosier beam your life through me,
Whom you would not abruptly let depart.
Loom fair the coming years, and light shall be—
If love and strength avail—your noble heart;
While mine the joy to put, full tenderly,
Away from you all fear of Sorrow's dart.

"How fair thou art."

How fair thou art. Thy form's ineffably
More fair than Eastern flush at dawn of day
That smiling beams o'er Egypt's sandy way;
More beauties in thy soft-souled face I see
Than prismed glories hath a Westering sun to me.
The budding rose, and all in garden gay;
The Eastern night, the fountain's sun-pierced spray,
Have centred all their lovliness in thee.

Thy beauty is my feeling soul's delight,
And dearer far than first-born's chastened kiss
To fondling mother in the lonesome night;
It gives me joys that all my pains dismiss;
And forms a lamp of sweet inspiring light,
Wherein I find immeasurable bliss.

"Of life, sweet Love."

Of life, sweet Love, I cannot be afraid
If but thou guide my else strayed bark, awhile
It ploughs life's sea;—ay, guide it with that smile
Of thine, which—like the stars—doth never fade.

For, as amid the darkened forest glade
  The lonely flowers bloom, and so beguile
  The drooping traveller to some brooklet-aisle,
Thy featured-light is by its setting made.

But if I were to lose the smiles that greet
  My eyes, I then should fear to stumble on ;
Because without thee life were incomplete :
  What would be joys, or highest victories won,
Apart from thee—but griefs ? Wert not, my Sweet,
  For thee, Age—Death would find life's task undone.

"It cannot be."

It cannot be—I may not judge the worth,
  That marks another's soul, by weight of things
  Undone ; not mine to stay the murmurings
Of roaming winds, nor lift from mother Earth
My would-be soaring feet ; th' infinite girth
  Of space I may not span who have no wings ;
  Nor can I judge at what the Morrow brings
By value of To-day. There is no dearth
  Of what I may not do. Then how shall I—
    Who cannot weigh the world in one small hand,
  Put checks on winds, size up a soul, nor fly

To other realms than this ; ne'er count the sand
Of ocean, nor the worlds that float on high—
Thus gauge this love I do not understand.

"Bourne of my soul."

Bourne of my soul, magnetic human star
That draws me on from earth to higher things,
And makes my heart forget life's murmurings ;
Source of my song, in whom I see afar
That virtue which doth ever form a bar
To keep away regret, my soul now wings
Itself to thee, and tenderly it sings—
Amid the night—the songs that never jar.

List then, sweet one, and may thy life be blest
While hearkening to my simple heart-felt lays,
Which fain would breathe to thee a perfect rest.
So would I bring a calm—amid the ways
Of life—as full of peace to thy dear breast,
As e'er to panting souls were Heaven's rays.

"Dear, let us love."

Dear, let us love for love's sweet self alone—
  Not for a glance, a smile, or beaming eye ;
  Affection's words, or soft responsive sigh,
Or noble deed ; nor that new strength one's tone
The other gives : let our love-seeds be sown
  For their unsullied sake, pure as the sky
  That smiles—blue, deep, and fair—above where lie
Rich Indian isles to clouds and cold unknown.

Then if we love because we feel we must
  Hold thus for sake of simple love ; and see
In each our soul's ideal one, no rust
  Of sad regret—however small it be—
Or Care-born tear can dim the love and trust
  We feel, and borrow from Eternity.

"Love truly."

"Love truly ere the time for love grows late :"—GOETHE.
  Find love's true self in youth while hearts are young ;
  Songs die away which years gone past have sung ;

Life wears apace, and Death will never wait
For love that's true : then love,—and smile at Fate—
  Oh ! truly, firmly as the skies high-hung
  Above yon' sailing clouds ; so when is rung
The bell of death Love's self will sit in state.

Then shall thy life, my heart's queen, be as sweet
  As softer evening kissing gentle day ;
And all thy nights and days in joy shall greet
  The love so true it cannot die away ;
And song shall round thee float replete
  With music dearer, richer than the lay.

"For God through thee."*

For God through thee—so let my life be spent ;
  My welcome task to strive to win, for Him,
  To light some souls that grope amid the dim
Lone ways of life ; give helping nourishment
To noble thought, and mend poor friendship's rent ;
  To light my lamp of usefulness, and trim
  It with that large-souled love on which doth swim—
A-clear of sighs—the buoyant bark Content.

*Milton.

Then fair, as star in azure setting mild,
  Shall be my pathway hence to him; through thee,
Who blest the life which else had been full wild.
If such my life, Ah! not afraid will be
  My Soul to meet its God, thro' one who smiled
My rescued spirit to Eternity.

"When I am gone."

When I am gone from you—have passed away;
  And your dear eyes can gaze no more in mine,
  Your soft voice whisper—"Ah, love is divine;
'Tis light from Him:" when night has come to stay,
And you can ne'er more take my hand and say—
  "Work bravely on; we will not now repine,
  For coming days may brighter on us shine:"
When this is o'er remember me, I pray.

Bear me in mind; yet do not, Love, be sad,—
  But smile; ay smile. Whene'er you think of me,
It is my wish the thought shall make you glad.
  Let no salt tears be shed; but tenderly,
And smiling, remember him who had
  The lasting joy to win your sympathy.

SONGS.

"O fair sweet lass."

O FAIR sweet lass o' Cymric toon,
Sae bonnie and sae witching O ;
Wi' hair o' black, and een o' broon
That set me a' a-itching O—
A-itching for ta be wi' thee,
And find a lower heaven i' thy e'e.

Thy step is like a morn i' June,
Sae gentle and sae lightsome O ;
Thy manner's like a song i' tune,
Sae winning and sae blithesome O—
Know, Cardiff toon, ye ha'e the best
O' a' the fairest lassies i' the West.

Thy voice is like the lav'rocks when
At morn it 'gins a-singing O ;
It stirs me sae I dinna ken
But that it is the winging o'

Some angel through the upper air,
And chanting soothing songs o' beauty rare.

Thy touch is like the thistle-doon,
Sae velvety and slender O ;
And tho' the warld ca's me a cloon,
I'll aye be true and tender O—
I'll love thee spite o' Fate's warst thongs,
And hail thee queen o' a' my better songs.

"Take of my heart."

Take of my heart what thou carest—
Take, Love, 'tis all ever thine.
Bring me the trouble thou bearest ;
Sweet, I will take it as mine.
Lean thou on me as I love thee,
Then wilt thou give me thy all,
Pure as the heaven above thee—
Free from the world and its gall.

Dear, I will love thee for ever—
Ever while life it doth last ;
Time, tears, nor trials may sever
Love that shall weather Care's blast.

Thou art to me all I cherish—
  Life, love, and link unto God ;
Sweet, an I lose thee I perish
  Pining to rest 'neath the sod.

Night-star and day-star, O guide me ;
  True is thine eye's tender light.
Dear, I would ever beside thee
  Find an increasing delight.
Come then, come share in my gladness ;
  Smile, thou hast nothing to fear :
Soul, let me rob thee of sadness ;
  Give me, O Love, thy last tear.

"I think that some day."

I think that some day I shall sing
  A song of miraculous power ;
A song of a land where ever 'tis Spring,
  And ever a noon-tide hour.

I believe I shall some day give,
  With utterance strangely sweet,
A song sublime, and ever 'twill live
  Where seraphs' voices meet.

I feel that deep down in my soul
There lies this song unsung ;
But I cannot piece it and make it whole—
'Tis too sweet for a human tongue.

Yet ever in dreams when asleep
I sing this marvellous song ;
It stirs my soul with a melody deep
As the Father's love is strong.

Yes, I know that this song I shall sing—
When my soul breaks free from its clay,
And soars on high on a snowy wing,
In the full of eternity's day.

"When I think of the songs."

When I think of the songs that dead poets have sung
For loves not so fair, Sweet, as thou—
Of the strains that have leaped from a mightier tongue
Than this which would sing of thee now,
Then I sigh for the wealth of their gifts and their hearts
To render a tithe of thy due ;
And my soul into passion with impotence starts
To write thee a song ever new.

When I look in thine eyes—soul-stars leading to God—
For similies search I in vain.
Then I gaze on thy lips, and the merciless rod
Of helplessness whips me amain.
Not the red of the rose, nor the juice of the grape,
Can vie for a moment with them ;
For they pulsate with life, and my powers
Escape to find a metàphoric gem.

When I watch thy dear movements I think of the grace
Of swans as they glide with the stream ;
For each soft rhythmic motion, each soul-wave on face,
Is but the sweet part of a dream :—
Of a vision that's haunting, enthralling, and dear,
Yet baffles my powers' best scope ;
For thou seemest a strain, from some melody-sphere,
Illuming where else I should grope.

"A fond farewell."

A fond farewell, O sweetest maid that eyes
Have ever dwelt upon ;
Misfortune's clouds shut out the skies
Where shone our hearts' bright sun.

Fate's stern decree we must obey—
  Life's night enwraps us round ;
And bids each seek a separate way,
  Where only tears abound.

Still, should worse circumstances pierce
  This crushed keen-feeling heart,
And troubles come more wild and fierce
  Than this that makes us part ;
Yet will thy love illume the gloom—
  O faithful heart and rare !—
As heavenly rays the martyr's doom,
  Thou Sweet beyond compare.

Oh, weep not, Love ! that Sorrow's night
  Hath marred our life's fair noon ;
Look up—the clouds shall break, and bright
  Will shine our harvest-moon.
Come, ere we part, and let me kiss
  The tears from out thine eyes ;
That they may glow—fair stars of bliss,
  Where soul of beauty lies.

That done, Beloved, a last embrace,
  A silent lipped-goodbye ;
One lingering look on thy fair face,
  One smothered heart-born sigh.

Then, smiling, let thy kerchief wave
  Me on this new sad way ;
For loves like thine make cowards brave,
  And fit them for the fray.

"Blest Isle of my birth."

Blest Isle of my birth, thee will I adore
  Till the last drop of blood ebbs away from my heart ;
And though spite defame thee, down to the core
  I will love thee, my Country, till death bids us part.

Though strangers deride thee—knowing thee not,
  Nor the loved tongue I learnt in thy flowering vales—
Though fogs and thick clouds be mostly thy lot,
  Thou art still the dear object affection entails.

Thy bays and thy headlands, rocks, and grey streams—
  On whose bosoms glides proudly a world's floating wealth—
Have been and will be our poets' loved themes,
  And thy oft-changing climate begets us rude health.

As shimmering star in azure on high,
  When calm Night droops her mantle all moonless and clear,

Points souls that are sad, and ready to die,
To that realm where they never shall know of a tear ;

So, land of my boyhood, thou art to me,
When old Neptune's wild waters heave skyward between,
A star to my fancy beckoning and free,
Out-gleaming all earth's stars though great be their sheen.

Thus ever while life gives power to my frame,
I will love thee, and hail thee the first of all lands ;
And barter no tithe of nobly-won fame,
Which thy sons have bequeathed thee at Duty's commands.

"There are Lads."

There are lads with gentle manners,
Tender words, and frank blue eyes
Where the love-light lies a-gleaming,
As do stars in frosty skies ;
There are lads with health and lads with wealth,
And comely all to see ;

Some bold, some shy, some with a sigh,
  Whene'er they come a-courting—
    When they come a-courting me ;
Whene'er they come a-courting—
    When they come a-courting me.

Come there lads of limb and muscle,
  Brave as heroes e'er have been ;
Lads whose dark eyes glow with fondness,
  As they deeply murmur—" queen ; "
Lads of loyal hearts and manly parts,
  Who come full eagerly,
And ask me why I turn and sigh
  Whene'er they come a-courting—
    When they come a-courting me.
Repeat.

There are those that bring me presents—
  Roses from the Squire's trees,
From the city shawls and ribbons
  Which they offer on their knees ;
But I turn away and say them nay,
  All handsome though they be,
And check the sigh that rises high,
  Whene'er they come a-courting—
    When they come a-courting me.
Repeat.

There are lads—ay, lads in plenty,
  Who come craving for a kiss ;

Saying it would make them happy,
  Give them years of purest bliss—
But I keep them all, however small,
  For Colin o'er the lea ;
And that is why no lad may buy,—
  Until he comes a-courting—
    Till he comes a-courting me ;
Until he comes a-courting—
    Till he comes a-courting me.

"Keep ye your Southern beauties."

Keep ye your Southern beauties with
  Their dark and luminous eyes,
Where sparks of hazy passion lie
  Like stars in midnight skies ;
Keep ye their sensuous movements, and
  Their wealths of jetty hair,—
Though rise they high, they come not nigh
  My British girls so rare.

I care not for their luscious lips—
  Though none so richly red—
So tempting that e'en Cupid might,
  To make them so, have bled.
I hear their dreaming-bell-like tones,
  And mark their languid air ;

Yet, kin nor kith, they cannot with
My British girl compare.

Though saunter they 'mid orange groves,
Or bask in terraced-shade ;
Or move at night through famous halls
In sprightly masquerade ;
Yet not their witching lace-draped forms,
Nor white busts full and bare,
Can equal thee on daised-lea—
My British girl so fair.

Then all your night-eyed beauties keep,
Their glamour flits me by ;
Their 'passioned warmth, their loved romance,
Beget in me no sigh :
For roaming by the babbling brook,
Or merged in household cares,
My every part, by Nature's art,
My British girl ensnares.

"Thou mavis o' the braes o' Ayr."

(Written on the anniversary of the hour on which Burns died).

Thou mavis o' the braes o' Ayr,
Whase spirit's noo wi' bonnie Jean,

Thy death-day roond has rolled ance mair—
Sin' then a hundred years atween.
And o'r the wide warld far and near,
Wherever Scotia's sons are foond,
To thy luved mem'ry fa's the tear—
On north and sooth and tropic groond.

The daisy draps its white-fringed face,—
The wee bit mouse ca'd thee its friend.
Fu' mournfu' was thy earth-boond race,
And, ah! sae darksume was its end.
Nae peace the warld wad gi'e thee, Rab;
Yet ne'er on airth were sangs mair sweet,
Than these thou sung'st mid tearfu' sab,
Thy winsume Highland lass ta greet.

Thy life's sad star went dreary doon—
Alas! sae aft do singers' stars.
Thy day ca'd thee a witless loon,
And marked thy blithesume soul wi' scars.
Noo shimmering gleams thy fame alang
The track auld Father Time has trod;
Bright meteor 'mang the stars o' sang,
Nae mair's for thee the cankert rod.

Sweet songster o' the misty North,
The braes and lochs and winding streams,
Ne'er may thy name frae tongue gae forth
But blent wi' honest kindly themes.

Thou poet o' the heathered hills,
  Wha asked for bread—not flinty stanes—
Thy name shall live while rin those rills,
  And aught o' song the warld retains.

"'Tis this one's Gait."

'Tis this one's gait, and that one's style,
  And now the contour of a face;
Again the radiance of a smile,
  That 'minds me of thy witching grace—
But moulded all into a whole,
They yet would lack thy kindred soul.

Now beams an eye so like to thine
  It might have borrowed been from thee;
And now, more rich than rose-red wine,
  Come lips that know love's alchemy—
But give to them one heart, and still,
They touch me not where thou canst thrill.

Again I see a damasked-cheek,
  Or supple neck, or wealth of hair;
A figure full yet trim and sleek,
  And movements such as hearts ensnare—
But were they given all to one,
They could not charm as thou hast done.

Though tender tones, mirth-sparkling eye,
Rosed-cheek, sweet mouth, and winning ways;
Soul-gleams that features beautify,
And all that win a life-long praise,—
In one fair form with love were blent,
My heart would own thy government.

"'Tis only direst moments forge"—

'Tis only direst moments forge
The blood-dictated blade,
That cuts the galling bonds of Kings
Who would in slaughter wade.
O Britain! thou hast forged ere this
Sharp steel for tyrants high;
Hast hauled the foul oppressor down—
Wilt now stand idly by?

Wilt watch the bludgeon's murderous blow,
While brightly smiles the sun;
The monarch-ordered sword descend,
And leave thy work undone?
Forbid it, O Thou Christian God!
Rouse Britain to a man!—
Up Scot, and Celt, and English, too;
And God be in the van!

Dost see these butchered children lie
  Beside thy dallying feet ?
Their blood-still-oozing wounds a gape—
  O lambs unfit though sweet !
Dost see yon' Turkish scimitar
  Cleave ope that woman's head'?
Canst hear her call for mercy as
  She falls, outraged—and dead ?

Hell has once more its devils loosed ;
  Out East stalks Murder large ;
Horrors by fiends invented, and
  Weak innocence the targe.
Men, babes, and women, slaughtered down
  Because Christ is their creed ;—
O Tyranny most foul ! Arm, arm !
  And to the East proceed.

"Just when Night is palling."

(RECITATIVE).

Just when Night is palling the earth, and day is done ;
Just when birds are calling their loves at set of sun ;
Just when leaves are falling, all burnt and brown and dry;
When summer joys have fled, and winter draweth nigh ;
Just when life's dark embers are dying, and the sun
Of life is setting ; ay, just ere the race is run,

And wings thy soul on its embassy,
Belovèd, call on me.

When flees the garish day,
And fretful children leave their tiring play,
Then call, Sweetheart, on me.
When Night doth round thee cast her sable pall,
And bares thy poor soul's agony,
O Love, remember me and call.
When nights refuse thee sleep,
And days—like famished men—woefully creep,
And sap thy faith that God can see,
Call then—call thou on me.

When trouble fills thy breast,
And aches thy poor bruised heart for gentle rest—
Oh, loved one, call on me.
When seeming friends turn cold and pass thee by,
And scorch thy soul to enmity,
Call thou on me thy tears to dry.
When blinding grows life's mist,
And starves thy soul to be again deep kist,
Amid life's bloodless tragedy,
O twin-heart call on me.

When looms the silent grave,
With nameless horror, numbing hearts erst brave—
Then must thou call on me.

When kindly opes the path that leads to Heav'n—
Ere quits thy soul captivity,
Call thou, that wrongs may be forgiv'n ;
That thou to God may soar
Forgiving, pardoned—there to kneel, adore,
And plead for me His clemency—
Call, loved through death, call me.

"There are beautiful eyes."

There are beautiful eyes which come seeking my own,
  There are lovely lips that tempt me the while ;
There are cheeks whose pink roses are ever full-blown,
  But they move me not though sweet is their guile—
For they are not of thee ; no, they are not thine,
And they never thyself from my heart can untwine.

There are willowy figures that soft brush me by,
  And which pause and turn as if to ensnare ;
There are rounded white arms which by gestures imply,
  "We would clasp you close if we only dare"—
But they cause no flutter ; they lack thy clue
To the secreted gate of my heart's avenue.

There are fanciful tricks of sweet womanly grace ;
  There are ample tresses, golden, and dark ;

There are smiles full as sweet as a Siren's embrace,
And there's laughter such as wrecks a life's bark—
Yet they breathe not of thee, and they never shake
My unswerving deep faith in thy love for my sake.

There are words—not to me—lowly said for my ear,
There are love-songs sung to please only me ;
There are heart-witching ways, O my peerless and dear ;
Ay, and looks e'en such as 'mind me of thee—
But they come not from thee, is my heart's still mean ;
Not from thee, O Beloved, my soul's very own.

"Your golden crowns."

Your golden crowns are heavy,
And bitter their wear, I ween ;
There's canker in your metal,
And corruption in its sheen ;
They reek of blood of victims,
They trample freedom down—
Oh ! icy the touch, to a glorious soul,
Is that of jewelled crown.

Away with your baubles of power !
Cumbersome, hard, and cold ;
And give me a wreath of the living leaf,
And keep your circled gold.

There's life and joy in verdure—
O give me a crown of green ;
And let the gems be flowers,
To jewel the leaves atween :
Let the wild winds toss my hair,
And brush my cheek a-glow ;
Come bind me a fillet of bright green leaves,
They will not overawe.

"O fair was the morn."

O fair was the morn when my Dearie and I,
With health on her cheek and sweet love in her eye,
Roamed over the meadows by Taff's purling stream,
To joy in the sunshine and bask in its gleam.

Not long had we wandered, not far had we strayed,
When 'neath a low willow to rest sank the maid ;
While Taff softly murmured his song to the breeze
That whispered it gently among the tall trees.

We had not long rested, when, raising her head,
She asked me to pluck her a wild rose so red.
With pleasure I reached her the flow'r from the tree,
To deck her fair beauty and sweet modesty.

With joy she then fastened the red rose so fair—
That loaded with perfume the fresh morning air—
Upon the dear bosom, to save from all strife
I freely would render the rest of my life.

Soon after, when moving, a thorn on the stem
Did ruthlessly prick the white breast of my gem,
And caused her to start with a cry at the pain ;
And fling the wild rose on the stream's mimic main.

"Ah! who would have thought," said the maiden so rare,
"That fangs could e'er lurk near a flower so fair ?"
"Think not, my sweet loved one," I soothingly said,
"That aught here's more perfect than yon' rose so red;
But thee—alone thee, has there ever been born
A being so perfect—a rose without thorn."

"For what shall I praise thee?"

For what shall I praise thee, my Dearie ?
For the light that glows in thine eyes,
And speaks of the heaven within thee,
And shames even that of yon' skies ;
Shall it be for thy wonderful beauty,
Or the starred-night hue of thy hair ?

Shall it be for thy charm of expression?—
That charm that none other doth share.

Shall I laud thee, my Love and my Dearie,
For the white soul that lives in thy voice?
So pure, so sweet, and enthralling,
That to hear it e'en birds do rejoice.
Or, say, shall it be for the rapture,
Thy soft touch doth rouse in my breast?
Shall it be for the love that is endless,
And cradled in such a fair nest?

Oh, no! not for these do I praise thee,
Though rich are the joys that they give;
It is for the glow and the sunshine
That ever within thee do live:
For the sweet, and the pure, and the noble,
Dear virtues that grace every part;
Ah, yes, 'tis for this that I praise thee—
The womanly cast of thy heart.

"Beneath thy window."

(Written to a Swedish Air).

Beneath thy window, maiden,
Again love makes me dare
To stand with passion laden,
And prove my tender care.

Not a branch of yonder tree,
  Nor the murmuring river,
Nor a roving wind so free
  From sleep shall thee deliver.

Sleep on, sleep on, sleep on,
Till cold night dews be gone—
        Sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep on.

Ay, slumber on till morning;
  Till sunshine comes again,
The starless blue adorning,
  And drying Night's still rain.
Not a sound however soft,
  Will I let escape me;
Not a screeching owl aloft
  Shall this night awake thee.

The birds, O Love, are sleeping
  Within thine arbour nigh:
The twinkling stars are keeping
  Their lonely watch on high;
And beneath thy lattice pane,
  Full of tender loving,
I, thy guard, here stand again—
  Thus my passion proving.

"Ah! do you remember."

Ah! do you remember, my Dearie,
When the light that shone in your eyes
Was warmer and sweeter and clearer
Than suns in Italian skies?—
When the grace and the charm of each movement
Was a spell and a honey-steeped snare?—
When the child would leave its gilded toy
To play with the sheen of your hair?

Ah! do you remember, my Dearie,
When a smile was sufficient return
For months of watching and waiting,
And a salve for a heart's deep burn?—
When the glow and the glamour of passion
Seemed all that our hearts desired?—
When kisses as warm as sunbeams
We rained, and were never tired?

Ah! do you remember, my Dearie,
When earth seemed a heaven complete?—
When love had the perfume of roses
All jewelled with dew-drops so sweet?
Ah! do you remember the day, Love,
When we parted in anger and haste?
Since then life's grown so weary,
And the world has become a waste.

Now the glamour and glow and the light, Sweet,
Have faded away with the past,
And through the mist of the years gone by
We can see who was right, at last.
We can see, now the scales have fallen,
As we near the silent grave,
How wronged, how hurt, how injured,
Was the heart that most forgave.

"There's a lad."

There's a lad in our village—
Bold and free, bold and free—
Who so loves sweet lips to pillage,
And he does it roguishly;
But though by lane or stile
He may kiss or he may smile,
Yet he never kisses me;
Ah; he never kisses me;
Yet he never; no, he never; no, he never kisses me;
Ah! he never kisses me.

His gay tongue is ever chaffing—
Bold and free, bold and free—
And his blue eyes gleam with laughing,
As the sunlight on the lea;

But though at work or play
He will joke with Nance or May,
Yet he seldom jests with me;
Ah; he seldom jests with me;
Repeat.

He's as clean of limb as merry—
Bold and free, bold and free—
And his lips are like a cherry,
While no lad can run as he;
But though so tall and strong,
As he speeds the maids among,
Yet he rarely runs to me;
Ah! he rarely runs to me;
Repeat.

Yet I think whene'er he passes—
Bold and free, bold and free—
By ourselves, or 'mong the lasses
On the Green where all can see;
Yet I think his glances tell,
Though he tries to hide them well,
That he loves none else but me;
Ah! he loves none else but me:
No, he loves none; ah, he loves none; no, he loves none else but me;
Ah! he loves none else but me.

"Come sing a Song."

Come sing a song to-night ;
A song of other days,
When Hope and Life were bright
Beneath Illusion's rays.
Sing low, not sad, but sweet,
Of those dear blissful hours,
When Love around our feet
Lay like fair wondrous flow'rs.

Come sing a song to-night,
My heart is full of pain ;
Sing songs of other days
And wake my soul again.

Peal then your clear notes high,
And point a life-long aim ;
Ay, sing of Hope and try
To paint a deathless Fame !
Then gently sober down,
And show a broken heart
How not to heed the frown,
When Love and Fame depart.

Ere done sing one wee verse
Of how wine drowns our pain,
And show how women nurse
Us back to peace again.

Then point a better way,
  Beyond the Grave and Death,
Where passions have no sway
  O'er God's eternal breath.

"God give, my Love."

God give, my Love,
The music and the song to thee ;
And all the pain of wrong to me.
God give to thee each white-souled hope fulfilled ;
Thy life a dream, or song that's gaily trilled.
God give to thee—God give to thee,
Each white-souled hope fulfilled.

Take thou the rose.
Let fortune give to me the thorn ;
Thus ever may it be : the morn,
A-glow, with roseate flush, be thine ;
The night—the long dark pitiless night be mine.
Be mine the night—be mine the night,
The roseate flush be thine.

Take thou the sweets,
The wormwood and the strife be mine ;
The joys of love and life be thine—

Thine be life's sunshine and its glow ;
Enough for me its winter and its snow.
Enough for me—enough for me,
Its winter and its snow.

Take thou the palm ;
For life shall give its guerdon unto thee,
And I will take its burden unto me—
Its burden unto me.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Sonnet.

To J. M. and J. B.

THIS morn I read upon a trophied page
How, far at sea, a lone ship tossed in grief;
While prayed its crew that God would send relief—
Ay, prayed as only pray those men who wage
A fight that ends but with corruption's stage;
Then down there bore two ships which robbed the reef,
That foam-capped lay a-lee, of that poor fief,
Misfortune else had paid to Nature's rage.
So came ye twain, when Life's wild billows roared
About my hapless bark—sail-torn and spent,
Unhelmed, short-manned, uncaptained and lee-shored.
Ay, came ye thus, and unsought succour lent;
The one to pilot, while the other oared
My fallen fortunes into Bay-Content.

To my Lyre.

Thou dear companion of many sweet
Long lingering hours of palm o'er-shadowed noon,

Of myrtle-fragranced nights 'neath Southern Cross,
And lone moons spent five hundred leagues from land—
Responsive Lyre, thou font of lyric-strain,
Voluptuous swelling, cadenced to its core;
Emotion's parent, child—its source, its self!
Calm, gentle spring of rhythmed meditation;
Unfingered strings that never fail to give
The asked for lay, though sweet, or gay, or sad;
How often have I turned to thee when pain—
Out-born of temperamental misery—weighed
Me down, or other troubles pressed me sore,
And found my richest consolation in
Thy humble self. Though friends forsake, keen foes
Wax strong, and Want abides while love grows cold;
Though Sorrow crowds upon me fast, and Age
Comes stealing on apace; though all combine
To render me fell Misery's mark, I still
Have thee. Though Ignorance—with fattened sides
Out-puffed nigh till his belly bursts, and big
With self-importance and blind bigotry—
With coarse guffaws points his dull finger,
Wisely grown, at thine unlettered musings;
Yet thou art salve for all the wounds he makes.
Though Fame—that brittle bubble bursting ere
'Tis touched—comes not to me, I miss the bites
Of venomous fangs that lacerate but souls.
Though, gaunt and bare, chill Poverty o'erhangs
My lowly lot, I yet can say—Beloved,
I make no plaint, for thou hast sweets enough

To sweeten gall. The critic's spleeny jest—
A lean-jawed wolf's hoarse bark at straying deer,
A jackal mouthing at an eagle's flight,
A snake's low hiss from 'mongst the tangled grass
At wondrous singing Philomel—the fool's
Disdain, the cold neglect of cultured wealth,
The envy of a brainless crowd, the hate
Of senseless party crews ; and all the darts,
So poison-steeped and foul, that Fame shoots
From her mighty bow, are arrows sent that pass
Me by.
Far from the crowded haunts of men,
In sweet sequestered sylvan shade, beside
A lane, or bosky primrosed dell in dingled wood,
I sit me down ; or lie and listen to
A nature's concert made by joyous birds
And romping stream ; Or, 'neath the pale
Moon's yellow beams, I wander near the still
Smooth lake to commerce with the stars, and wake,
Sweet Lyre, thy tuneful soul and make my own
Ideal world. With thee thus ever blest,
My treasured friend, I sigh not for a higher state ;
But live content on lowly fare,
In humble cot by woodland side, where morn
And noon and eve are freighted with rich songs
From feather-throated friends, and Nature paints
My pictures fair. 'Tis here I pass my days
In peace, with naught to mar their gentle course ;
Removed from man's unmanly fight, and all

His callous heartlessness. 'Tis here my soul
Finds life, and answers back thy calling strains ;
'Tis here my veins with witching lyric-fire,
Are charged by thee, thou pain-endeared Lyre.

An Impromptu Wish.

O for a quivering spirit-pen
  Dipped deep in seraphic fire !
O for a heart of poet-make !—
  The gift of a deathless lyre.

O for the blood by genius thrilled
  To quicken this palsied brain !
O for the power to fashion lines
  That make an immortal strain.

O for the soul of singer sprung
  Direct from the heart of song,
To mould a lyric with thy name,
  And stamp it on Time's great gong.

O, Sweet, for such strength would I give—
  An could the fair gift be mine—
A red heart's blood, a whole life's work,
  To sing thee a song divine.

Gwalia.

Hail, land of Cymru ! home of bardic song ;
My alien soul now rests in peace among
Thy hills and valleys fair. Romantic land !
My pensive soul no other would command ;
For none can fit my idiosyncrasies
Like thee, thou land of stranger mysteries.
My feet have trod the classic soil of Greece,
Mine eyes have gazed where Sappho sweet did cease
To sing inspired songs. Where Ilium stood,
I, too, have resting found; and felt my blood
Leap through its narrow bounds, while heaved my breast,
At thought of ruined Troy—grim jeering jest
At woman's faithlessness. Where Euphrates,
The mystic Nile, and Tiber, rush to seas
Which Helliconia blindly thought to be
The wide world's limit, I have wandered free.
Ay ! hither, thither, o'er yon old-time world
My roaming feet have strayed; my thoughts unfurled
Their sluggish selves, and backward they have sped
To live among the book-remembered dead.
Yet, Cambria, yet, no land has been to me
As dear as thou art grown in surety.
What Greece to Byron was ; Italia fair
To Shelley's pensive mind ; and Britain rare
To Dante lone exiled ; so, Gwalia, thou—
Mountains and vales—to me endeared art now.

Thou art the prism fair through which my thought
Is polarised, and purified, and brought
To dwell on nobler things.

Then wake, my soul,
And soar away to reach this higher goal ;
Or break, in wild attempt, thy feeble wings.
Strike, strike thy lyre, my muse ! and from its strings
Awake such songs, such lyrics, breathing soft
Aönian love, and murmuringly waft
Thine " Io adorato " unto this—
The mistress who has filled thy soul with bliss
As pure as drafts from fair Castalia's stream,
And sweeter than a soft-souled fairy dream ;
Or break, and cast away for evermore,
The lyre which thou didst love so well of yore.

To a Welsh maiden.

(Whom I met in the woods of Courtyralla, Dinas Powis).

No stilted theme my rhyme adorns ;
No belted knight ; no lady fair ;
No maiden's heart sore pricked with thorns
Of love, to show she must not dare.

No gallants gay ; no sweethearts cold ;
No courtly dame ; no kingly pomp ;

No monks well-fed ; no outlaws bold ;
No witching eye proclaiming romp.

A humble muse, is this of mine,
Who cares not for a high estate ;
Who looks not where the glories shine ;
Who envies not the rich and great.

A woodland beauty blithe and free,
With careless air and freedom's guise ;
And robed in love's sweet majesty,
That shyly peeps from liquid eyes.

Her raven hair of blackest shade
Hangs round a neck of beauty's mould—
Of lovely form, this woodland maid ;
Nor would she, e'en she could, be cold.

By morn and noon, and even's close,
Her busy hands work all the while :
No sluggard is this human rose,
Whose dower's a heart unknown to guile.

Her blackcap voice in unchecked strains
Awakes to life the woodland glade ;
And birds are gladdened with refrains
Trilled forth by this dear rustic maid.

There's music in the very air ;
The trees a rhythmic answer wave—

For such as her men do and dare
The deeds that make mean cowards brave.

Her skin is olive, pink her cheek ;
Her eyes are bright and dark of hue ;
Her manner neither proud nor meek,
But one sweet blending of the two.

Now such is this, my woodland muse,—
A breathing lily hither sent
By Him, crushed hearts to lift—infuse
With nobler, holier intent.

Lines.

(Written in a storm, while sheltering behind the ruin on the top of Caerphilly Mountain.)

A thousand rugged feet I stand above
The valley dark, alone with nature and
With God. No human form I see to greet
My searching eyes. Around, above, below.
Rude Boreas howls, and drives with hurried haste
The dark'ning clouds—surcharged with Earth's refreshening
Drink—against the mountain tops which rend
Their tender breasts apart and spill their tears ;

As Sorrow's ruthless thorn so often rips
And lacerates the feeling heart of man.
Below me flash with lurid glare, that lights
A moment brief the valley's gloom,
Stern Nature's crook'd electric gleams ; and peal
On peal of thunder wake the glade
That backward sends their echoes far and wide!
Forbidding gloom and lofty grandeur clothe,
As with a cloak that hides the inner one,
The towering timbered slopes.
So like to complex human nature seems
Yon' rugged mountain side ; here rocks, there trees
That nobly brave the rush of Winter's winds,
And there, again, so desolate and wild ;
While yonder far beneath me hide, amid
The woody gloom from eyes that roam but do
Not penetrate, the lovely greenwood nooks
So sweet and fair, unseen, unknown, unguessed,
Until the traveller stumbles in.

Sonnet.

(Written in the Churchyard of Peterstone-Super-Ely.)

Embowered lies, 'mid nestling hills that gird
The peaceful hamlet in, this village where
Serenely smiles from cot and garden fair

The angel bright of peace ; here warbling bird,
With nature's sweetest melody, is heard
  Unfettered, unrestrained ; the lambent air
  Here on its roaming wings sweet health doth bear ;
Here dwells content, and strife is never stirred.

No hot ambition moves the rustic breast ;
  The seasons fair, his daily work well done,
The smiling fields to him give all the rest.
  In peace he lives, in peace his life begun ;
Himself this world's most tranquilising guest,
  And thus serene his rural race is run.

Llandaff.

(This and the following piece were penned in the field adjoining the Cathedral.)

By Taff's meandering limpid stream,
(Where bards have often sate to dream,
Or sing with ever changing tone
Those songs they sang for melody alone)
'Mid peaceful fields, and waving trees
Now softly swayed by ev'ning's breeze,
Lies Llandaff city, old and gray—
The wasted relic of a bygone day.
Tho' short removed, yet still within
The ceaseless sound of toiling din—

Of man's ignoble, selfish strife,
The warping outcome of our modern life.
Now Autumn's leaves lie thick along
These meadows which have rung with song ;
And there, where stood in ages past
The Bishop's Castle, strong and grand and vast,
A pile of crumbling ruins lie ;
Their floor the earth—their roof the sky.
And there, too, where the martyred one
Did gladly yield his life in ages gone
For love of that dear faith he knew
To be the one—the only true ;
There, there old Time has shown his hand
As changing as a false and shifting sand !
Alas ! old City, now is flown
The prime which once was all thine own ;
No more thy bards will carol gay,
At early morn or close of day,
There 'passioned songs of chivalry,
Of love and fame and mystery.
Old Llandaff grey, thy day has fled,
Thy hopes are numbered with the dead ;
Unless thine humble prophet told
The simple truth like those of old.
And thou, like fabled Phœnix, rise
From ashes dead toward the skies,
And once again be Llandaff great—
A pow'r alike in Church and State.

Llandaff Cathedral.

'Tis sweet to roam, at even's peaceful hour,
Along thy holy dimly lighted ways;
And, musing there, in fancy paint the pow'r
Thy nobles held in unremembered days.

Or sit within thy time-resisting pile,
And picture there, by fond Illusion's wand,
The long processions down thy vaulted aisle
Of Canons dead, and Deans, and Prelates grand.

Or 'mong thy tombs to wander at sweet will,
Where rests the dust of some unknown to fame—
Yet who, perhaps, their mission did fulfil—
Now side by side with Pembroke's honoured name.

And, musing still, think how Sir Matthew fought
On Bosworth field in Henry's rightful cause;
And how the grasping Richard there was brought
To curse at heart Ambition's greedy laws.

Then, wandering on still deep in past events,
Above the doorways—resting with the dead—
See warlike flags in torn suggestive rents,
Their duty done—their history left unsaid.

And thus the ever moving hand of Time
Alike destroys the glory of all things;
Our birth and death, our state, ambition, prime,
All, all must fly! for all, alas, have wings!

Vale of Glamorgan.

Dear Vale of Glamorgan, my heart clings to thee,
Thou birthplace of beauty and sweet minstrelsy ;
Thy fields and thy hedgerows are dearer by far
To me than the glories of towns ever are.

How sweet 'tis to wander among thy green glades,
Entranced by the beauty of Cambria's maids ;
No mountains nor woodlands nor lowlands could be
So sweetly attractive as thou art to me.

Keep ye your hot strife and your close crowded streets,
Where jealousy ever the wayfarer meets ;
Your noise and confusion, your grief and its sting,
Ye haunts of the trader where Mammon is king.

Here blithely do warble, in freedom so dear,
The songsters whose songs so delight my lone ear ;
And spring the sweet flowers whenever I rove,
By wayside and hedgerow, in field and in grove.

No strife of contention here fretteth my soul,
No grubbing in darkness like burrowing mole ;
No din, and no dust to poison the air
So pure from the wild wood, so green and so fair.

Thy woods, sweet Glamorgan ; thy dearly-loved streams,
Whose music I love to accomp'ny my dreams ;

Thy peace,—Ah ! so soothing to world-wearied breast—
That enters the heart with a sense of true rest ;

Thy health-bearing breezes perfumed with the smell
Of violet and primrose, and nodding bluebell,
Are dearer and sweeter than ever could be
The glory of fame, wealth, or beauty—to me.

Lines.

(Written at Sunset on Cardiff Bridge).

Sweet Nature lends this lovely scene a charm
That soothes the soul, and softens down the harm
Begot of callous life. The river fair,
Here lost in deep'ning shade so sweet, and there
In basking light displayed ; the drooping trees
Which hem it in, as if to keep the breeze,
That would its peace disturb, from coming near
The winding way—the stream to them so dear ;
The mossy banks where bards of old did sing
Impassioned songs, and with their harps did ring
The silent thickets deep ; the pretty flow'rs,—
As innocently sweet as childhood's hours—
That droop their nodding heads and close their eyes,
As sinks the sun in ruddy Western skies ;

All, all alike with peace pervade the soul
That yearning pants to reach a fairer goal
Than worldly hearts can know.
Thou rippling stream
That onward bear'st thy way beneath the gleam
Of yonder gen'rous sun, and lavest the bough
Of fondling grateful bush and tree that now,
For watered life, thy limped waters smooth,
As if they would thy inner troubles soothe—
How like to life art thou.
How pure begins—
A tiny babbling brook that softly sings
Its happy song all day—thy broadening stream,
To lose ere long thine early life's fair dream,
And from pollution's touch become as foul
As thou wert once so fair.
Then rolling on,
Thy whilom charm, alas, forever gone!
At last be lost in yonder stretching sea,
As life is lost in death's dark mystery.

Cilfynydd.

High overhead in golden beauty shone,
The germ of life.
The air was sweet with scent of hay new mown,
And peace was rife.

The feathered songsters sang, 'mid leafy grove,
Their noontide lay;
And kindly Flora o'er the valley wove
Her carpet gay.

From song and sunshine, bird, and bee, and flow'r,
And pure air,
The miner sank, at mid-day's ripened hour,
We know not where.

Some fifteen hundred blackened feet he sank;
And left behind,
Upon the black yet heaven-lighted bank,
His women kind.

His children, wife—ay, all that made life dear
And sweet to him!
He left without a thought of coward fear,
Nor death so grim.

The morn so bright; the noon, in full-blown beauty decked,
Knew not a care;—
A fitting prelude to a sight so flecked
With black despair.

Not long had Sol his arched meridian passed
When upward rose,
From out the colliery shaft, a blast
Of fire that froze—

In petrified amaze—each pair of eyes
That saw the flame
Rushing above, as if upon the skies
'Twould write its name!

Then Horror rolled his heavy avalanche
A-down the hills;
And here and there, where met to mix and branch
The valley's rills,

Hell stood a-gape. Then spread the fatal news,
As it alone
Can spread; and e'en the air bore many a bruise
From shriek and groan.

From village near; from town, and field, and wood,
All grades of life
Rolled on to view, in one continuous flood,
Death's gruesome strife.

* * * * * *

Now round the shaft in quaking horror stand
A paley crowd;
And consternation upon ev'ry hand
Strong heads has bowed.

Rings out a call—"Who, who will volunteer?"—
And not in vain.
A hundred tongues respond from men who fear
Nor death nor pain.

Heroic men, God's noblest master-work,
Enter the cage ;
And in the task of rescue do not shirk
Death's fiercest rage. . .

Now eager stand around the gaping shaft,
With hung'ring eyes,
The stricken crowd whose silent pray'rs do waft
Toward the skies. . .

Stand back ! stand back ! The cage now reascends.
What news ? What news ?
A corse appears. A shriek the air now rends !—
And such the news.

Now cry on cry and groan on groan do pierce
Th' affrighted air ;
And mis'ry broods around, wan-faced yet fierce,
E'en ev'rywhere.

Corse after corse is borne from far below,
And laid around,
For recognition, in a sick'ning row
Upon the ground.

By kindly hands, to homes erstwhile so gay—
Now sad and drear—
Those who are known are gently borne away,
'Mid sob and tear.

But what of these with not a friend to own
Their crushed remains ?
(Poor ones unwept, unfollowed, ye've out-grown
This world's small pains).

Though here unknown in death, in life were ye,
Alas ! unprized ?
Beyond the grave—above the stars you will not be unrecognised.

* * * * * *

Cilfynydd, Oh ! Cilfynydd, how great
Thy woes must be.
Thy morning fair ; thy noon with joy elate ;
Thy night—misery.

Lines.

(Penned on the top of Garth Mountain).

What grandeur meets my ravished eyesight here !
Now fades cold earth, and draws my soul more near
To peacefulness and God . . .
Beneath me lies—
And seems to smile at yonder sunny skies—
A carpet weaved by lavish Nature's hand,
Where lowland beauty blends with mountains grand.

The winding path ; the shady wooded dell,
The haunt of primrose and of sweet bluebell ;
The browsing kine ; the meadows fresh with dews
All decked and garbed in verdure's sweetest hues ;
The village church ; the river rolling free,
Whose music fills the air with harmony ;
The skylark's warble, high above the crown
Of Garth's great summit tipped with green and brown ;
The rural cot from which upcurling come
The quiet smoke, and sense of peace—all dumb ;
('Cept yonder warbler's soul-uplifting song,
And Taff's rough music as he speeds along) ;
Yet, Oh ! how eloquent. The woods, the fields,
The dells, the streams ; ay ! ev'ry item yields
A silent tome of thought.

Fade, fade, vain worm,
And all of which thou art the fleeting germ.
Thy puny strength, and thine enfeebled efforts all,
Thy vaunted name, thy stumbling rise and fall,
Thy pigmy woes, thy hungering to be free,
Thy cursed ambition and thy galling tyranny ;
Thy greed, and crushing down another's soul
That thou may'st reach thine own hot selfish goal,
Have here no place. Not thou, nor aught of thee,
Can ever reach the grand sublimity
That voiceless nature knows.

An Impromptu.

(Written immediately after receiving—from a then unknown admirer, afterwards discovered to be E.M.B.R.—a picture of the genius of poetry).

O fair, unknown, yet treasured giver of the gift
Of poetry unveiled,
Whene'er my fancy sailed
Away from earth clouds thickly clustered round the rift,
And all my songs curtailed.

But not of words. No richness ran in riot o'er
My ink-bespattered page;
No jewel did engage
The reader's eye—no imaged gem of thought to pour
Its truth along our age.

Where'er I tried to soar—whatever song I sung—
Earth stamped it with her stain.
But now—the spirit-plain
Of poesy I may pursue with purer tongue,
And higher heights attain.

My walls bore not such pictured gems as this thou'st sent.
It lifts my soul, and straight
I seek the sunny gate
Of sweet descriptive song; surpassing all my pent
Up past to reach such state.

Be thy reward, my gift, these few imperfect lines.
Thy guerdon, too—thou'st freed
A fettered tongue, a reed
Made strong, broke clouds and shown a warmer sun tha shines
Where bosomed lie new seed.

Pieces written in Roath Park.

Among the Flowerbeds.

O BLOOMS, ye are rich in your glories;
O, Earth, thou art gay with thy blooms,
That sing me my old rhythmic stories,
And draw my dead hopes from their tombs.
O flowers, how fair is your beauty,
How tenderly sweet, and how frail!
Yet, growing, ye teach me my duty—
To work though I fail.

Ah, once in the past I resembled
Ye blooms in your glorious hues;
Like ye, too, I bowed me and trembled—
Ay, shook with the rapturous views
Which that inner eye gained in roaming
From bloom unto bloom of the mind,
From sunpeep through noontide to gloaming—
Stern practice behind.

Ah, heart, thou art sad with thy yearning;
  Ah, soul, thou art racked with the pain
Of striving and hoping and burning
  To polish the best of thy brain.
Oh, blooms of the mind, ye are blasted,
  Scorched up with the drought of despair;
Oh, flowers, had ye but outlasted
  The hunger and care!

O, Man, thou art callous and cruel,
  And dead to the sweets of the mind;
The ermine and velvet and jewel
  Thy senses to sordidness bind.
Cold earth hath more love for the lonely
  Than thou with thy heart and thy brain;
It offers him peace, and thou only
  Dost tender him pain.

O, Pan, with thy goat's legs all hairy.
  O, Pan, with thy sweet sounding pipe,
Wouldst thou of thy kindness be chary
  As men who are made in God's type?
Nay, then, to old Earth be my singing—
  Out, Man, from my song evermore!
Henceforth will I woodward go winging
  Its blooms to adore.

Vae Victis!

Ever the same, ever the same,
Morning and noontide and night;
Far though I gaze never a flame
Lightens the gloom of the fight;
Under the hill the shadows hang still—
Heavy as Death in his might.

Weary the wait, weary the wait,
Hard is the battle and long;
Fortune, I stood here at thy gate
Serving with hand and with song—
Stood till I fell to torments of hell,
Down 'neath the feet of thy throng.

Oh, to be free; oh, to be free
From the sharp gleaming teeth of care!
Freed from the wolf's maddening glee,
Out of cold Penury's lair—
Peaceful asleep where eyes never weep,
Breathed not unanswered is prayer.

Blood of the brave, blood of the brave,
Staining the millstones of gods;
Writhing with pain, wishing the grave
Tender its shelter of sods.
Sensitive child, of genius wild,
Whipped with hell's keenest of rods.

"Drifting."

Drifting away with the stream;
Drifting apart from the source;
Drifting outward to oceans wide,
Beyond the river's course;
Drifting afar to terrible seas
Where tossed, and dashed, and broken,
It sinks at last—'tis sodden so—
This little branch of oaken.

* * * * * *

Drifting away from home;
Drifting, oh, how much!
Drifting—driven to depths beneath
Respectability's touch!

Drifting further from love;
Drifting nearer to Hell:
Drifting along the downward grade
To end where none can tell.

Drifting away to Death;
Drifting a-down the course;
Drifting—hounded from former self,
By Fate's irresistible force!

Drifting afar from friends;
Drifting apart from kind;

Drifting away to a grave at last
That none, perhaps, can find—
Driven to knock at the gates
Where the devil sits grinning behind.

Pray for us.

The mills of the gods "grind slowly,
But they grind exceedingly" fine;
High, low, or evil, or holy,
And to them the blood is as wine:
They grin while they grind the immartial,
These millers immortal and mystical.

The mills of the gods are blasted,
And the gods of the mills have grown blind;
Their justice—a ship dismasted,
And exposed to demon-like wind:
They howl and they revel, as madmen rave,
While grinding the hearts of the good and brave.

The gods of the mills are dancing
For ever about the great stones;
And yell they while wildly prancing
To the airs composed of our groans.
O mighty the millers that grind us fine,
And drink of our blood as the rich drink wine.

The Lassie's Poesy.

(A Mardy incident of the journey of the Prince and Princess of Wales from Aberystwith to Cardiff.)

On a bank by the glistening lines
  Of steel, where the carriages were ;
In the midst of the blackening mines,
  And coal-dust air,
Among a small group of the lowly
She stood in her maidenhood holy.

Poor and stricken, yet winsome and sweet,
  Her shrinking and fearing wee court
On the bank round about her to greet
  Life's master-sort ;
Her eyelids adroop, and her gazing
Askant through her lashes amazing.

She was only a working-man's child,
  So humble and crippled and frail ;
And she tendered her blooms from the wild
  And brackened dale—
Her scentless and dust-ridden flowers
That nodded for want of cool showers.

'Twas a marvellous sight to behold.
  Not hers were the rich buds and rare ;
Yet she brought them, their weak red and gold
  More dull than fair—

She brought her small offering mutely,
Presenting it humbly and suitly.

'Twas a tribute to offering's worth,
And Denmark's sweet lily approved;
'Twas humanity's touch, spite of birth,
The Princess moved
To take the wee lassie's dim token
Of loyalty pure and unbroken.

O ye cringers, in open or stealth,
Go fawn for such honours in vain!
Take your cold loveless hearts and your wealth,
Your mud-hued brain,
And lay your mean souls—so earthy—
In mire for a smile from the worthy.

A Reflection.

Now falls the sere and yellow leaf,
And weeping Nature dons her garb of grief;
Her prime is past—the full-bloom summer fled—
And mourning deep she sees her idol dead.
Low at her feet, now gone or going fast,
The lovely flow'rs—too beautiful to last—
Are lying now, their last soft sweet perfume—
Their soul, their inner essence—to illume

Their weeping mother's woe is stealing up,
And sweeten thus kind Nature's bitter cup.
Across the darkened, misty, hidden sky
The low'ring clouds with hurried haste go by ;
And pour their tears—of which there's now less dearth—
On too long thirsting palpitating earth.
Now Boreas strong—a spirit from a cage—
Goes roaming free, and vents his pent-up rage ;
The dying zephyr moans her own requiem soft,
Unsung, unwept except by clouds aloft ;
Then melts away amid her saddened theme,
Like soul by anguish torn and waked as from a dream
Angelically fair, 'mid unalloyed repose,
To straightway bear a dying murderer's throes.
Thus Nature yields the summer passed away,
And shrouds herself in robes of sombre grey.

Vale.

Farewell to all ye fields and lanes, and wood
Beneath whose shade so oft we two have stood
And watched the rosy tints as ev'ning fell—
With softening touch—on woodland stream and dell;
Each wrapt in sweet Reflection's mazy fold,
Each mind gone back to knightly days of old
When men and maids were true; so near, so much,
So deeply were our twin-like souls in touch.

Farewell, thou pool whose smooth and placid face
So oft has tried to mirror out the grace
Her matchless figure knew; but vain the task,
Of her sweet self 'twas part, and not a mask
Of comely view to hide a darker side;
For love to all did in her soul abide.
Adieu to each association dear;
Each scene of joy, where Doubt would disappear
When Hope displayed her shaft of 'luring light
And vainly try to chase away the night,
Alas! the future held. Farewell, ye brakes—
Beside the stilly, sweet, reflecting lake's
Cool margin fair—within whose shade
My breast her head a heaving pillow made
(So welcome each to each) full oft and long:
And where her dear soft sorrow-soothing song,
At twilight's hour, has lulled to gentle rest
Whatever cares within my tired breast
The toilsome day had roused; her song, at which
The feathered singers, with a sudden twitch
Of joy, have checked their tuneful ev'ning praise,
And mute remained to hear her sweeter lays.
Adieu to friends, to home, to all most dear;
Now heaves the sigh, and falls the pain-forced tear
A-down my burning cheek. Now throbs the heart
With deep-felt woe that we, alas! must part.
Some other clime, to me as yet unknown,
Must shroud this form; and I—a wanderer—own
No land, no love, no home. Some other air

(Though foul, 'twould still be sweet to me if there
Thy form could be) my panting lungs must breathe,
And lonely soul its crown of sorrow wreathe.
Some foreign soil my alien feet must tread;
The stranger's pillow lie beneath my head.
Some generous hearts a kindly shelter give
The wanderer, who as such must ever live.
Some stranger hands will grasp the hand which thou
Shouldst claim thine own, and keep the virgin vow.
An unknown grave, may-hap where graves are not,
At last will end the exile's joyless lot.
Farewell to thee—thou first, thou last, thou best—
Whose winning smile first waked my soul from rest
It ne'er can know again; whose loving word
My inmost soul and nobler instincts stirred;
Whose soft influence turned my callous heart
To better ways, and stilled its baser part;
Whose face and form—whose self and dearer love
My sleeping soul so lifted far above
Its former self as Heaven over earth;
Whose sweet, unguessed, yet lasting priceless worth
God only knew, and I the power did feel
Whose heart it changed to gold from frosted steel.
Adieu to thee, who made my heart to glow
With love as such we mortals seldom know,
Yet who hath cast a cloud of sorrow o'er
My wakened soul, and closed and barred the door
Of joy and peace for ever 'gainst my heart,
Though made it better by a deathless smart.

Farewell to all ; to all a last adieu ;
Where'er I be my soul will still be true
To thee, lost love, to thee.

Impromptu.

(Written to a lark while hearing it sing).

Heaven-ward winging,
Seraph-like singing,
Bird of inimitable note ;
Out o'er the lambent air
Sweet goes thy song and rare
Making a grave for care—
Magic melodious throat.

Musical flyer,
Lifting man higher,
Further and further from earth,
Day's richest singer thou ;
Smoother of wrinkled brow,
Oh ! to be with thee now,
Finding a mighty new birth.

Songster material,
Poet ethereal,
Speck in the glorious vault :
Propping yon' skies of God's

With thy rhythmic rods,
Richer thy periods—
Richer at every halt.

Melody flinging,
Earth-ward bringing
Heaven and love by thy song ;
Up in thy barless cage
Sing, and the soul engage,
Free it from pain and rage
Gotten by man and his wrong.

Curst.

Scorned is the letterless one,
Who would fain blend his rhymes with some sense ;
Scouted by some who are schooled
In the world of book-learning or pence.
Though his work bears the stamps of the gods
He may sing !—he may starve, until hence
He is under the sods.
Tempted to seek the green bowers,
And by nature unfitted for trade,—
Priest of the Muses and flowers,
His sky-overarched temple a glade ;
While his choresters, rich with sweet powers,

Are the birds in the leaf's kindly shade,
From the dawn to the moon's pale hours.
Poor muser and dreamer at best,
How little his life hath of rest!

Damned with ethereal thoughts
That up-send his lone soul to the stars!
Whether or no he may wish
To be borne in his airy-wrought cars;—
To be winged and be wafted away,
To the gates of the great golden bars
Where the white angels pray.
Gifted? Ah, no! He is blasted!
In his temperament he is curst—
Laughed at by fools, and dismasted
In the midst of east winds from the purst;
Ay, and when he has thirsted and fasted,
And has toiled—while misfortune him nurst—
He may die ere his pain's outlasted;
May die with a song on his tongue,
Or wormwood at callous hearts flung.

Curst with the gifts which the gods,
In their wrath, have inflicted on him,—
Gifts they will never take back,
Though his sensitive soul it should swim
In the throes of a world of fierce care;
And his faith flicker down until dim
In his crushed heart's despair.
Such is the wight who, though poor, yet would sing—

Poverty lashed, and soul riven,
Till he feels that God's name he could fling
In the faces of those who have Heaven
On their tongues without ceasing, and sting
The sore heart of the metrical steven :—
O generous man, and how just !
Poor wriggling blind worm in the dust.

Of such are Poets made.

"Come, tell me, Love, what poets are—
Of gods or men?" she said. Then, pointing far,
Where planets moved in atmospheric cars
Of luminosity,—"Are they such stars
As yonder gleam, but wandered far astray;
Some fair worlds' souls from Milky Way—
Bright fallen gems off Heaven's jewelled breast,
Dropped to illume our life, and make it blest?
Or are they crushed lone spirits, whom
A roving wind has caught in cruel play;
And carried off through space and gloom,
To be sweet lights within a tomb,
And chase the dark away?—
Strange spirits from some stranger unknown land,
Where seas of love upheave on Passion's strand;
Where golden Hope for ever sheds her night,
And Day glides on unchased by frowning Night.

Are they of such?—from such a sphere,
Made sad by slow transition here?
Poor punished alien souls in human mould?
White-heated sacred fires encased in cold
And common outer shells?
Come, Sweet, unloose thy pent-up mind,
And let it act as acts a wanton wind
On fine-toned sensitive bells:
Are they of gods or human-kind,
These poets who excel?
O loved one, quickly tell!"

Thus ceased the maid,
And glowed the dear love-light
Within her soulful eyes,
As soft we strayed;
While smiled the Queen of Night
From yon' mysterious skies.
Then, as she bent an ear of pearly-shell,
Most gracefully down-brought,
I did assay my fair Abdiel to tell
Why works the rhythmed thought.

"The poet, Dearie, is of human-kind,
Yet made to know as knows no common mind
The heights of joy, and darkling depths of woe;
Life, love, and friendship, and the hate of foe.
His thoughts unbidden gush in flowing song,
To find an echo here and there among

The feeling hearts of men. He haply sings
While others idly rest their untouched strings.
'Tis his to bear immeasurable love,
To soar away to worlds of light above
This canker-eaten life. 'Tis his to know,
And feel within, the ever burning glow
Of Hope's undying flame. 'Tis his to sink,
By misery thrilled and weighted down, and drink
Full deep of life's sad draught; to have engraved
Upon his plastic, hot, impulsive heart—
Too quick to love, or hate, or writhe and smart—
The idle hopes with which Hell's floor is paved.
But not alone to him the power is given,
Hades to taste and know the joys of heaven.
There be of those who tread this yielding earth,
Whose silent hearts give not in gladsome birth
The songs that well within; some poets—mutes—
Whose stringless lyres and voiceless lutes
Sweet echoes never wake, and thus impart
A kindred joy unto another's heart.
It is the fate of bard, who strikes his lyre,
To fan the flame of feebly smouldering fire;
To paint anew all heart-upstirring themes,
To give in song what others feel in dreams;
To touch the silent chords in others' breasts—
The chords that sleep enfolded in the nests
Of hearts less warm than his. 'Tis his to live
Misunderstood, yet dying all forgive;—
To know, to feel, to grasp, describe,—ay, ride

The waves of feeling in the passion-tide
Of life's tempestuous sea. Of such strange make
Are singers, who their trembling lyres awake
To give their souls in song."

Out of Touch: An Impromptu.

"I'm out of touch with my work to-day,
And the world seems all forlorn;
So I'll up and away
To the fields and play,
As oft I did in the bright heyday
Of life's untarnished morn.

"I'll leave my books and my work behind
To care for themselves to-day,
And out in the fields with rustic kind
I'll sport and play
At hide and find
Among the newmown hay.
And there philosophy I will make
To quit my puzzling brains;
And again I'll awake
From its sleep, and break
My soul from its trance, and then partake—
With the lassies and their swains—

Of a luncheon earned with the sweat of brow,
Beneath the oak tree's sheltering bough,
In the heat of the summer day."

Then up from his chair the greybeard sprung.
And into the fields he went;
And so gaily rung,
As he blithely sung,
The air with his merriment.

He frolicked with Youth, and he talked with Age,
And gamboled the time away;
Then 'neath a tree—
So tired was he—
The student grey
Stretched out his weary frame among
The fragrant fresh-cut hay.

And then when the sun was sinking fast,
Away in the Western sea,
They tried to wake
From its sleep, and break
His soul from its trance, but they found it free
To soar away to the heights beyond
The reach of philosophy.

He left his books and his work behind,
And went to the fields to play;
And there in sleep—
So long, so deep—

The things that had troubled his earthy day
Were rendered plain, in a plainer way
Than all the thought
Which in life he had brought
To chase the mist away.

Gloom and Sunshine: An Impromptu.

I left my sombre chamber to-day when the sun peeped in;
And out of the town with its dust and heat,
Its toiling crowds, its narrow street,
And its maddening weight of sin,
I bent my steps to the country, where
I could poise my soul for scenes more fair.

I sought this Park and its upland rise,
Its flower-beds, its murmuring stream,
To play at hide-and-seek with a dream,
And oust the specks from my smoke-dimmed eyes—
Once more to revel on Nature's breast,
And smother the cares that life infest.

I romped and rolled with the sunny child—
Again a child was I—and welcomely,
Like a frolicksome boy in laughing glee!
The gallant wind toyed full gaily wild
With my tangled locks, grown stiff and staid
With the town's miasmal air so death-inlaid.

In happy mood—in fierce despite of blistered hand!
I rowed my boat on the mimic sea;
While tears of happiness leapt all free,
To roam again my dim lost Glamour-land.
As I rowed and rowed, with tightening grip,
O'er the laughtering waves in my mastless ship,

Low down in my heart a wordless song,
Of infinite tenderness, grateful joy
For the gift that thus did my cares destroy,
I sung to the winds as I glided along.
Then cried to Nature—"Greet, greet your child!
I am here again, unfettered and wild."

I left my books and my sombre room,
And came to the Park to play;
Then rented myself a dreamhouse gay,—
Unknown to philosophy, care, or gloom—
Where yon' laughing brook babbles along to the sea,
And stirs my heart with its melody.

To my last two Medallions.

Ye hateful cause of all my cares and pain,
A thousand curses rest on your foul name!—
On all your callous brood!
For ye I've toiled with might of limb and brain—
Not with a hope, nor e'en a thought of fame,
But just for daily food.

Still all my snares, however finely set,
Ye've managed to elude and keep me poor—
Ye bright highway to Hell.
Mayhap I worshipped not enough ; and yet
I beat, both day and night, your brazen door,
My health and work to sell.

I do not ask a plenty of your kind—
Ye captain-general of the Devil's crew !
I have no wish for wealth.
My wants are few, and simple to my mind ;
I would not let your power my soul imbue,
In open or in stealth.

I am a poor disciple ? Ay, no doubt ;
I cannot sell my self-regard for ye—
You fair Damnation's friend.
Though I have starved—my light well-nigh put out—
I could not hail ye first of gods, tho' free
My soul were mine to lend.

Nor will I ever love ye as do some ;
Tho' hunger greets me with each setting sun,
I'll spite ye to your face !
Tho' Want's relentless avalanches come,
I'll ye defy until I have out-run
This ill-conditioned race.

When I am dead.

When cold and stark this carping body lies
Consign it to no grave,
Neither in land or wave;
For both are dear—too dear so to despise.

Bear me away—or what corruption's left—
To some wild rocky shore,
Free as the spirit bore
Its own untrammelled self ere life was reft;

Yet where the waters lap, in calmer moods,
A tender soothing song
The dreamy whole day long,
When tempests sleep and nature softly broods.

There, where the two I love—earth rippling wave—
In fond embraces meet,
And laughing, singing, greet
Each other's self by sands or sounding cave,

Build me a funeral pyre; my pall the sky—
The wordless book of God,
Each star a period—
Whereto my soul doth ever want to fly.

Strew round about me every flow'r that grows—
There is no death, no gloom ;
What need we of a tomb?
'Tis only change—for sweet my spirit knows

A boundless love for them ; and I would fain
Their scented souls are near
With mine above the bier,
And chant unto the spheres a spirit-strain,

Meanwhile the rite goes on. And when 'tis o'er,
Take up the ashes left—
Of all earth's stains bereft—
And e'en let them some time attempt to soar.

Go seek, I ask, some mountain's fronting crest,
And freely scatter there
To every roaming air,
From North and South, grey East and ruddy West,

The small material left. For so in life
I loved the fair and free,
The winds that sung to me
Their songs unstained by man's contentious strife.

Then up amid the soaring throng I'll wing
My singing self to hear
Each separate glowing sphere,
And really know what songs the stars do sing.

Street Murmurings.

The Newsboy.

St. Mary Street, 10 p.m.

"Hi, hi! "The Star" an' all the latest news,—
Oh, criky! but its cold. An' that big bruise
As father made on my left leg last night
Aches fearful bad, as if it owed a spite. . .

"Hi! 'Hextra Speshul,' 'murder of a Nun,'
The Burstin' of a' Eighty-one Ton Gun'!—
Oh, say, 'ere's rain. I'll 'ave my papers wet,
An' then another wackin', sure, I'll get. . .

"My, patience! Eh, but w'at a 'owlin' wind.
I'll go an'—Buy a paper, Sir. I'll find
You change! Just 'old my copies . . There, that's one.
'Ere goes—sell out afore the people's gone;

"Or else a thrash—Yes, Sir! . 'Ere, Sir! . That's three.
Hi! 'Fearful Storm," "Collisions on the Sea,'
'Great Loss of Life'; 'A' Earthquake in Japan';
'Lord Salisb'ry's Speech! an'—my, there's Tom M'Cann.

"Say, Tommy, 'ave yer sold yer papers out? . .
Me? No. My throat's so bad that I can't shout.
An' w'en a feller's lost 'is pow'r ter yell,
This sellin' papers is a reg'lar sell. . .

"Me a-goin' 'ome? No; *I* must sell the lot
Afore I goes, or else I'll catch it 'ot.
Goodnight. . . Hi! 'Hextra Speshul,' 'Ships gone down,'
"Another Robb'ry in Temp'rance Town!' . .

"By jingo! but I wish I had some shoes—
It's mighty 'ard ter work like this fer booze.
Nigh ten o'clock; an' 'alf-a-dozen yet.
I'll get a wackin' 'fore I sleeps, I'll bet.

11.0 p.m.

"I'll creep inter this alley out the rain,
An' try ter sleep in spite o' cold and pain.
There's one good thing—I'll get no thrashin' 'ere."

* * * *

He sleeps, while trembles on his cheek a tear.

A Living Fingerpost.

Time, 11.45 a.m.

"My God, how hotly pours the sun's fierce ray
On my devoted head the livelong day!

It seems that here the penalty is paid,
And Hell has clipped me ere my body's laid
At rest. . . Yet must I go thus placed between
Two dangling boards, each bearing words of green
And sickly hue upon a field of white,
Reflecting back the heat and dazzling light
Of yonder cursèd sun : and telling all
Who read, to-night a fashionable ball
Is to be held, adjacent to a room
As such the one that witnessèd the gloom
Which fell on me, and which I made myself
By thirsting so to gain that subtle elf
By men call gold—that very place wherein
I oft had stood to prove another's sin.

Thus grinning Fate's unalterable law
Has deemed it just that Retribution's claw
Should lacerate the little conscience left,
And find a sermon, too, to bind the cleft.
Keen, cutting mockery of fate ! too weak
To use a pick, or shovel coals, or seek
A means to live in any other way,
I needs must be a fingerpost all day,
And point to where gay Pleasure holds her court,
And where I once was known ; but now resort—
By force of having worn a prison dress—
Where crimes are hatched to bear a damned success.
Thus day by day I trudge the blistering street,
Hateful of all ; and wishing but to meet

The wheels of some big sympathetic dray
To end the life I dare not take away."

The Outcast.

Time 11.45 p.m.

"I stan's a-thinkin' an' musin' at w'iles—
O' nights w'en summer is come—
Of the lanes an' fields, with the'r paths an' stiles,
And the bees with the'r drowsy 'um.

"I dreams sometimes w'en the weather is 'ot,
An' dust lies thick on the street,
Of some shady trees, and a w'ite-washed cot,
In a corner w'ere hedges meet.

"Then I shuts my eyes, an' I thinks I sees flow'rs—
Soft vi'lets an' daisies fringed w'ite—
As I plucked in my innercent young hours,
W'en I rambled from morn ter night.

"An' I 'ears the thrush an' blackbird 'at sings
In 'edge, an' wood, an' in tree;
Till I sees the face of the devil wot flings
From the'r 'omes such women as me.

"Then a blur gets up ; an' I curses at 'eart,
An' goes fer brandy ter drink ;
Fer it brings fergetfulness—makes me part
With the wantin' ter jump the brink.

"Oh, God ! 'ow I'd give my life ter be back—
A woman pure as the best,
But I can't—I'm stamped with a curse ! I'm black,
An' can never get w'ite, or rest.

"The world of good people wants none of me ;
So I walks the streets up an' down,
Till the copper comes with 'is cries ter be—
'Off away' ; an' 'e tries ter frown.

"But 'e knows who're bad, an' 'e tries ter be fair,
An' not be 'arsher than needs ;
'E's the one as knows, if no others care,
That a' outcast's heart often bleeds.

"Then I moves away ter the 'ouse, or a bar,
An' goes fer brandy again ;
Till I quenches thought, an' forgets there are
Some human devils called men."

Another Phase.

Time 7.30 p.m.

" Oh, how they sweep their cleaner skirts aside
For fear of touching mine !
They walk the narrow line
Of chastity—I run the hellward wide.

" And yet, my silk is just as good as theirs—
My language as correct.
But I, alas ! am flecked
With stains so foul they mouth of poisonous lairs !

" Oh, sisters !—for I am a woman still,
And crave a pitying word !—
Why do ye spurn the bird,
Soiled, battered, cursed, that fell—against its will ?

" Have mercy, ye who tread untempted, good,
Life's even pathway fair ;
And breathe the healthy air
Of homes where peaceful glides the sluggish blood.

" Ye do not know the fearful life we live !
We are not evil all.
Oh ! spare your quiet gall.
Dear Christ forgave. Can you not pity give ?

'Oh! there be Magdalenes a-seeking rest ;
And who would gladly die
If that would rectify
The past, the body clean, and ease the breast.

" Would you—all ye who us despise—quit life
To keep you names as now?
I doubt it, though the vow
Were given on the edge of scorn's keen knife.

" Oh, Father! deal more kindly with our sins
Than she who scorns, and fears—
Poor birds of night, and tears
In secret wept—to speak the word that wins."

Cardiff:

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